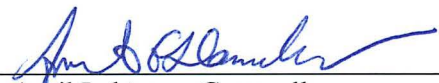



COMMUNITY SPACE FOR DECOLONIZATION AND RESISTANCE:
KODIAK ALUTIIQ LANGUAGE CLUB PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES

By

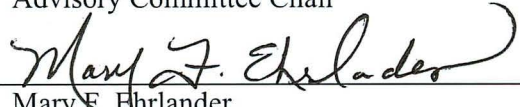
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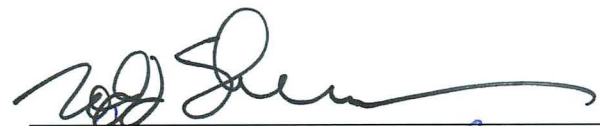

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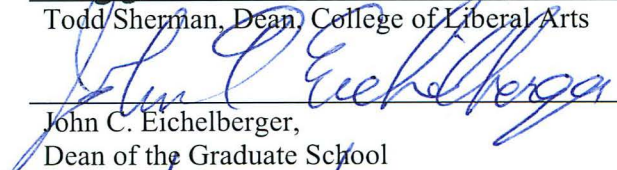

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COMMUNITY SPACE FOR DECOLONIZATION AND RESISTANCE: KODIAK
ALUTIIQ LANGUAGE CLUB PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES

A
THESIS

Presented to the Faculty
of the University of Alaska Fairbanks

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for the Degree of

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By

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Fairbanks, Alaska

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Abstract

Language Club is one of many Language Revitalization initiatives currently being used to reclaim space for Alutiiq, a highly endangered Alaska Native language. Since 2003, Language Club has been a site of learning and sharing for both Alutiiq language learners, and Elders. The study draws upon eight semi-structured interviews, numerous post-data discussions, field notes, and observations in order to understand Language Club participants' spoken and unspoken goals. Data was analyzed using Constructivist Grounded Theory. Themes and subthemes identified include: community, family-like structure, culture and tradition and healing. Using Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) to better understand these themes, we find that Language Club functions as carved out space within the broader community where participants are able to engage in decolonization and resist hegemonic domination by the broader community.

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1.0 Introduction

The Kodiak Alutiiq language is severely threatened and on the brink of being lost to the community. In recent years, community initiatives have focused efforts to bring Alutiiq back from its current threatened state. One such effort is the Alutiiq Language Club, which began in 2003. Language Club was established as a place for Alutiiq language learners and speakers to gather and focus on language learning in some capacity, whether that be through Alutiiq conversation or grammar discussions. This research focuses on language learners who participate in Language Club and identifying reasons why they continue to return to Language Club. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, small group discussions, individual conversations, and observations beginning in September 2012 through the end of March 2013.

I began attending Language Club in 2009. As I continued attending Language Club, participants became my friends, peers, and role models. Through Language Club I became aware of factors influencing Alutiiq language revitalization, like new learner recruitment, learner retention, working with Elders, and finding ways to integrate a marginalized language into the broader community, to name a few. At the time, I talked casually with other Language Club participants and language revitalization participants about what influenced them to continue participating in language activities like Language Club. These discussions often times lead to questions about what the 'next-step' forward in the language movement might be. These discussions sparked my interest. I knew there were questions embedded in these conversations that needed answers. Examples of questions embedded in these conversations included: How do we

recruit more learners? How do we keep learners coming back to language activities? What will make us learn Alutiiq more efficiently? How do we accomplish everything with limited resources and people? Conversations with embedded questions like those listed above made me realize that as an outsider finding his way in, answering just one of these questions was a way for me to contribute.

I started graduate school at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the spring of 2011. In my third semester, it came time to begin defining an area of focus for my research, or in other words, which of the many questions embedded in previous conversations with language learners I could feasibly answer. I drew from discussions I had with peers in Kodiak and from classes I had taken in Fairbanks to formulate a rough draft of research questions. With a rough draft of research questions, I began calling friends and mentors back in Kodiak to get their reactions before I posed the final draft to my academic committee. However, the more I thought about what the ‘next-step’ forward might be, I realized that an understanding of what language learners wanted or needed must be first identified. I called on three people in particular, April Laktonen Counciller, Ph.D., Alisha Drabek, Ph.D., and Kari Sherod, to make sure the questions I had drafted were appropriate and if they would be useful. I refer to these three individuals as my “community committee.” I discuss these individuals in greater depth in chapter 4 to give the reader a clear understanding of the important roles these individuals have played. I got responses of support and excitement from my community committee. I then prepared to talk with my academic committee about concrete research questions, thankful for the background support from respected mentors back in Kodiak.

1.1 Research Questions

The approved research questions are stated as follows:

1. What are Language Club participants' spoken and unspoken goals? And how do they define their goals?
2. What product or 'end result' do participants seek through their participation in Language Club?
3. How do goals match or mismatch with available activities and resources in language revitalization? For example: Does Language Club itself help participants reach their goals? Do available activities outside Language Club better meet their needs? If so, how do they use them?

I initially thought that these questions would present a better understanding of what language learners wanted or needed in regards to language learning tools or environments. However, the findings from this research did not lead to explicit tools that learners wanted or needed to better learn Alutiiq. Instead, findings from this research point to the criticalness of the Language Club community. Community here references family-like attributes participants find through Language Club participation. Through the Language Club community, participants discussed the ways they are able to access Alutiiq culture and tradition. Access to the community, tradition and culture created opportunity for participant healing from a past where Alutiiq language and culture were marginalized and nearly removed from daily life. The themes of community, tradition and culture, and healing emerged from the conversations during the data collection

period. In the chapter on implications, I discuss some of the ways these findings point towards elements of resistance and decolonization as a product of Language Club participation.

1.2 Research Limitations

As in any research setting, this research contains gaps. One clear gap in this research is a lack of voice from previous Language Club participants who no longer attend. Understanding their views and insights could have painted a broader picture, and led to more robust conclusions. Former, or non-participant perspectives could have shed light on some weaknesses of Language Club, or language revitalization initiatives. A non-participant perspective could have defined ways the Language Club community is not meeting the needs of specific potential language learners.

Similarly, this research does not attempt to address Language Club as a site of language learning. Participants shared an expressed goal of learning Alutiiq language through participation in Language Club. However, the topic of language learning was not well addressed in the interviews. I attribute this to the nature of the data collection process and the assumption by many Language Club participants that Language Club plays a role in language learning. Topics regarding language learning were often skirted to talk about other topics and themes like community, family-like ties found at Language Club, or culture and tradition.

1.3 Thesis Overview

The remainder of this thesis is organized as follows. Chapter 2 outlines the research site. The chapter will begin with a description of who the Alutiiq people are. This will include details about Alutiiq homelands, and basic information about the Alutiiq language itself, including a description as to some of the reasons why the Alutiiq language finds itself in a threatened state. The discussion about language loss will be presented through an historical context. The chapter will also present what Drabek (2009) defines as the “Alutiiq Renaissance”, which influenced the beginnings of Language Club.

Chapter 3 will begin with a discussion about language policy and planning. These terms will be outlined with definitions that will be used throughout this thesis. The discussion then turns to colonization, where colonization will be defined and discussed in terms of the Alutiiq experiences on Kodiak Island. This discussion is broken into three sections, including Westernization, social change, and dislocation. Language policy and planning will then be discussed in regards to colonization, as both a tool that has undermined Alutiiq, as well as mitigated against colonization.

Chapter 4 will outline the theoretical foundations of this research, tribal critical race theory (TribalCrit) and constructivist grounded theory (CGT). These theories will be outlined, along with a discussion of action research (AR) as a mechanism to implement these theories. My positionality as a researcher conducting research within an Indigenous community will be outlined in section 4.4. My positionality is a critical component to understanding the relevance of the method and theories employed in this research, considering I am a community outsider. I am not originally from Kodiak, nor am I

Alutiiq or Alaska Native. The chapter ends with a detailed outline of the research design, including specifics of the research site, participants, data collection processes, and emergent themes derived from data analysis.

Chapter 5 will present the data collected. The discussion will be organized around the primary theme of “community” and sub-themes of “family”, “tradition and culture” and “healing.” Each of these themes will be discussed using quotations from the interviews conducted with research participants, along with a sampling of quotations from post-data discussions, or discussions following the original interviews with participants.

Chapter 6 will offer some concluding statements and implications of findings about the research from a TribalCrit perspective, which asks researchers to consider findings through the lens of colonization.

2.0 Research Site

Alutiiq populations are dispersed along the Alaska Peninsula, southern portions of the Kenai Peninsula, Prince William Sound, and throughout the Kodiak Archipelago (see figure 1). The following pages will explore who the Alutiiq people are, with a specific focus on Koniag Alutiiq peoples of the Kodiak Archipelago. The chapter will explore the status of the Alutiiq language through a brief discussion about language shift and the impacts on Alutiiq language. This will help create an understanding about how the Alutiiq language has gone from a state of marginalization under colonial rule by Russia and the United States, to a burgeoning language revitalization initiative in recent years.

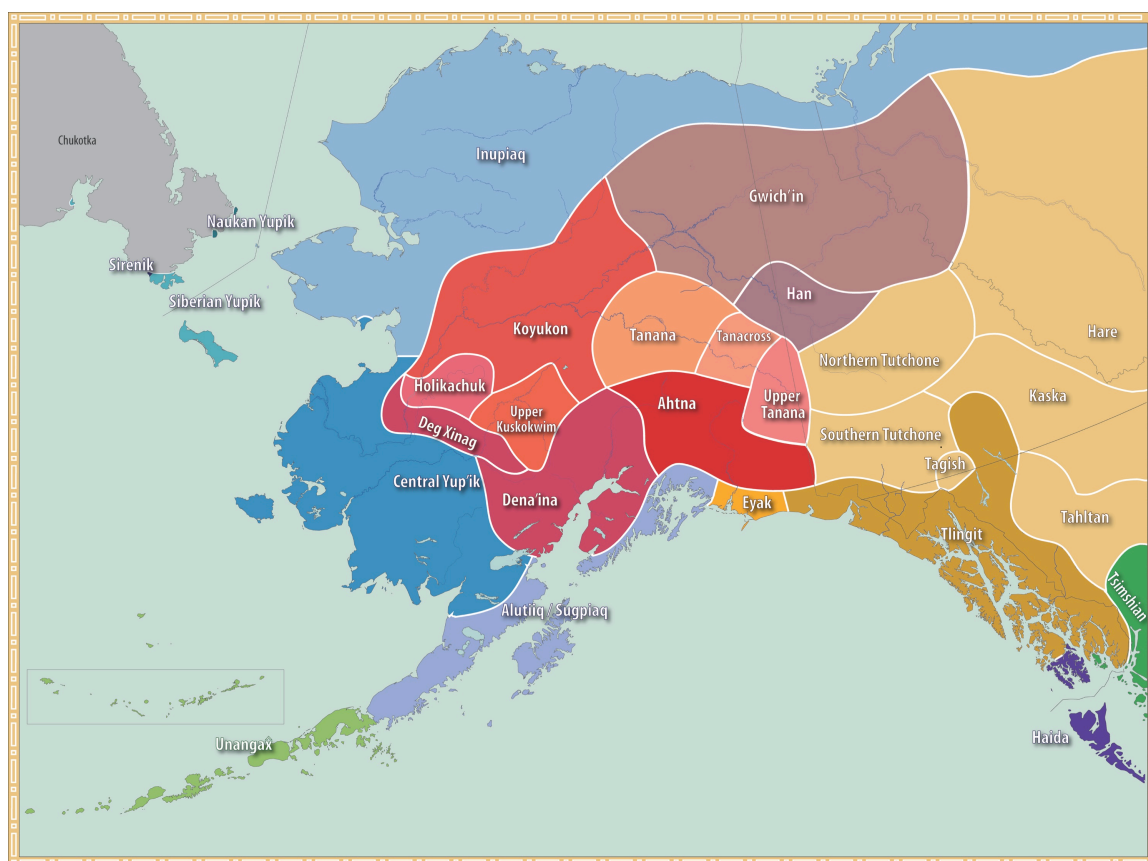


Figure 1: Alaska Native Languages Map (Alaska Native Language Archive)

2.1 Alutiiq History and Language Status

The Alutiiq language has two primary dialects. Chugach Alutiiq and Koniag Alutiiq (see figure 2).



Figure 2: Chugach / Koniag Alutiiq Map (Google Maps)

The latter is specific to the Kodiak Archipelago and the Alaskan Peninsula in southwestern Alaska. Koniag Alutiiq also contains sub-dialects specific to Kodiak Alutiiq and Alaska Peninsula Alutiiq. Focusing on the Kodiak Archipelago another linguistic distinction arises. Two sub-dialects exist between the northern and southern reaches of the Archipelago. However, locally the northern and southern sub-dialects are known as styles. Therefore the term *style* will be used in order to align with local ways of describing the northern and southern sub-dialects. The northern style originates from the

villages of Karluk, Larsen Bay, Port Lions, Ouzinkie and Kodiak. The now abandoned village of Afognak also spoke northern style Alutiiq. The southern style has traditionally been spoken in Akhiok, Old Harbor, and the now abandoned village of Kaguyak (figure 3). Although considerations of language style are prominent, this paper will be considering Kodiak Alutiiq as a single dialect to better focus the discussion. It is worth noting, however that the two styles of Alutiiq spoken on the Kodiak Archipelago hold important differences. For more information about style differences and their importance, please reference Counciller and Leer (2006) or the Alutiiq Museum's website (<http://alutiiqmuseum.org>) or alutiiqlanguage.org. Understanding these specific differences between styles is not the aim of this study. Instead I hope to offer some generalizations regarding the status of Alutiiq within the Alutiiq region, and the impacts of western contact on communities and their language.



Figure 3: Kodiak Island Map (Google Maps)

Alutiiq people traditionally referred to themselves as “Sugpiaq”, meaning “the real person.” Russians, however called the Native peoples they encountered “Aleut” or in a plural form “Aleuty” (Pullar and Knecht 1995, 15). After initial contact with Russians the Sugpiaq adapted the Russian term of “Aleuty” into their own language by transforming the word into “Alutiiq.” Many Natives to the region now use Alutiiq as a self-designator. Similarly, the language of the Alutiiq people was referred to as Sugt’stun, literally meaning “like a person.” Today both the people and the language are commonly referred to as Alutiiq (Counciller and Leer 2006, ii). Although some may still use the

term Aleut, Sugpiaq, the vast majority use Alutiiq. The term “Alutiiq” will be used from this point forward when discussing the Native people and language of the Kodiak Archipelago.

The Alutiiq language on the Kodiak Archipelago is in extreme decline and in danger of being forgotten. In 1982, Krauss, a linguist from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, estimated there were approximately 900 speakers of Alutiiq (Krauss 1982, cited in Hegna 2004, 6). By 1994 that number had dropped to approximately 450 speakers (Krauss 1994, cited in Hegna 2004, 6). In 2003, a survey of Alutiiq speakers conducted by Hegna (2004) concluded there were 45 semi or fully fluent speakers on the archipelago; the average age of those speakers was 72 years. In 2010, The Qik’rtarmiut Alutiit Regional Language Advisory Committee identified 38 living first language Alutiiq speakers on the island, with an additional 17 speakers living off island (Collaborative Strategic Planning, 2011-2015, 61). The term “speaker” here is used rather broadly and has been borrowed from Krauss’s (1997, 2) definition of a speaker as someone who is “not necessarily commanding a full range of the traditional vocabulary or even of the grammar, but [is] able to converse with ease on a variety of topics.” For Krauss, this speaker would also be able to raise his or her children in the language or provide basic language documentation information.

Of course the number of speakers is not static. The population of those with a command of Alutiiq continues to decline as the average age of first language speakers continues to increase with time, creating a crisis for language retention. According to Fishman’s (1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), a commonly used

scale classifying languages by placing them on a status continuum ranging from the most healthy and resilient at “stage 1” to languages in decline at “stage 8”, Alutiiq is currently experiencing stage 8 (Counciller and Leer 2012, 7). As such, Elders on Kodiak have few others to talk with. Their language has been relatively unused for some time and their language proficiency may need to be re-learned or re-built in order to be accessible to younger learners.

As the statistics cited above show, Alutiiq is in danger of being lost to the community. However, community efforts to reverse patterns of language and culture loss, efforts referred to collectively by Drabek (2009) as the “Alutiiq Renaissance”, have been observed around the region (Counciller and Leer 2012). For example, in an e-mail message from November 6, 2013, Counciller revealed that two new advanced Alutiiq speakers and 10 new intermediate Alutiiq speakers have been identified, pointing toward successful efforts to reverse language loss. The broad outlines of this Renaissance will be discussed in section 2.3. But first, I will attempt to address the questions: How do we measure the extent of language shift? and How did the Alutiiq language and culture become disrupted in the first place?

2.2 How Do We Observe Language Shift?

Two commonly used language shift scales are Fishman’s (1991, 87-109) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), and Krauss’s (1997, 25-26) grading system. Fishman’s grading system examines intergenerational language continuity, while Krauss’ grading system evaluates language viability based on age distribution. For the sake of this

research, I find Fishman's (1991) Graded Intergenerational Distribution Scale to be locally appropriate because it has been used to help focus language revitalization efforts in Kodiak by functioning as a mechanism to compare and contrast efforts with other Native American communities (Hegna 2004, 56). Fishman's (1991) scale attempts to qualify an exact stage of language shift a community is experiencing by assigning a number ranging from one to eight. Stage 8 indicates a language that has been highly impacted, spoken by a sparse number of isolated elderly, whose language is unlikely to live onto the next generation. Conversely, stage 1 indicates language use in "higher level educational, occupational, governmental and media efforts" (Fishman 1991, 107). The stages in between indicate varying degrees of intergenerational disruption. The following table 1 outlines each of the eight stages defined by Fishman (1991, 88-109). Fishman uses the term "Xish" to stand for the language in question. "Xish" is used to represent common language name constructions, i.e. English, Spanish, Swedish, Danish, etc. "Yish" is used to describe the dominant language in question. Using this research as an example, "Xish" would be Alutiiq, and "Yish" would be English. "Xmen" are speakers of "Xish", and "Ymen" are speakers of "Yish."

Table 1: Stages of Language Shift

Stage 8	Most users of Xish are socially isolated old folks and Xish needs to be re-assembled from their mouths and memories and taught to demographically concentrated adults
Stage 7	Most users of Xish are socially integrated and ethnolinguistically active population but they are beyond child-bearing age.
Stage 6	The attainment of intergenerational informal oracy and its demographic concentration and institutional reinforcement
Stage 5	Xish literacy at home, school and community, but without taking on extra-communal reinforcement of such literacy
Stage 4	Xish in lower education that meets the requirements of compulsory education laws
Stage 3	Use of Xish in the lower work sphere involving interaction between Xmen and Ymen.
Stage 2	Xish in lower governmental services and mass media but not in the higher spheres of either
Stage 1	Some use of Xish in higher level education, occupational, governmental and media efforts (but without the additional safety provided by political independence)

Although Fishman's (1991) GIDS scale is broadly accepted to classify the status of a language, it is less than perfect. A critique of Fishman's scale can be displayed by considering the status of the Alutiiq language. For example, as described in the previous section, Alutiiq is currently categorized at stage 8. Fishman (1991) defines stage 8 as "most vestigial users of Xish are socially isolated old folks and Xish needs to be re-assembled from their mouths and memories and taught to demographically concentrated adults" (1991, 88). While this classification of Alutiiq is true, the Alutiiq language is also being integrated into higher levels of education as a subject in Kodiak. The integration of the Alutiiq language in school and college, for example, could be evidence of a language with a stage 5 classification. Stage 5 is defined as a language with "Xish literacy in home, school and community, but without taking on extra-communal reinforcement of such

literacy” (Fishman 1991, 95). This example of the scale’s imperfection may simply evidence the scales inability to thoroughly categorize languages experiencing revitalization.

The GIDS is called into question when considering languages without writing systems or when trying to place a language, like Alutiiq, that has attributes of multiple levels. However, Fishman’s scale is still a strong model to indicate the health of a language. Although evidence exists of Alutiiq in multiple levels of the GIDS, the language is largely representative of a stage 8 language, with minor domains expressed in other levels.

Using this scale to quantify language loss alerts communities to the status of their language. In the case of Kodiak, the status of language shift was made clear in Hegna’s (2004) report where she noted that Kodiak’s Alutiiq language hovers at stage 8 on the GIDS scale. The explicit recognition of the status of Alutiiq translated to language action and revitalization efforts in the region (Hegna 2004, 56). A revitalization initiative was a logical response for the community to mitigate against further language shift.

Using GIDS as a standardized scale makes language shift seem measurable and helps communities like Kodiak gain a greater sense of control and camaraderie with other communities whose languages are also experiencing shift. Using standardized scales and measuring devices, like the GIDS, helps mobilize communities to collaborate when they can compare the gravity of language shift in their own communities and understand how others may be responding. More important than measuring language shift, Hegna (2004, 56) argues that using the GIDS to compare and contrast language shift mitigation efforts

with other Native American communities has helped justify and focus efforts in the a language revitalization program in Kodiak.

2.3 Loss of Language and Culture: Russian and American Rule

The Alutiiq language and culture has experienced four distinct phases of change since first contact. The first phase was an era of initial contact between Russian colonizers and Alutiiq peoples occurring between 1784-1818. This period has been defined as the as the “Darkest Period” (Crowell, Steffian, and Pullar 2001). During this period, the Alutiiq people experienced the arrival of a new religion, different educational approaches, foreign commercial expectations, and other new cultural norms. Scholars (Crowell, Steffina, and Pullar 2001; Drabek 2012) have argued that a devaluation of Alutiiq cosmology, traditional stories, and oral traditions was a consequence of this period. Greater detail about the impacts of the Darkest Period have been documented by Crowell, Steffian and Pullar (2001); Drabek (2012); Krauss (1980); and Miller (2010).

The “Darkest Period” was followed by what Drabek (2009, 6) defines as the “Golden Age” of Russian America, occurring between 1818 to 1867. The Golden Age saw widespread bilingualism and multilingualism throughout the Kodiak Archipelago with a unique multicultural, racial, and linguistic social structure (Oleksa 2005; Miller 2010). Alutiiq, Russian, English, and other European and Native languages were widespread during this period (Black 2001; Oleksa 2005). Products like school primers and holy texts in Alutiiq evidence the acceptance of Alutiiq into church and school domains. Drabek (2009, 6), and Oleksa (2005, 104) note, however that these texts

facilitated the conversion of Alutiiq people to Russian Orthodoxy, which further undermined traditional practices and beliefs. The Golden Age is well documented by Black (2001); Crowell, Steffian and Pullar (2001); Drabek (2009); Dauenhauer (1996); Oleksa (2005); Counciller and Leer (2006); and Krauss (1980).

The Golden Age ended with the Treaty of Cession in 1867 when Alaska became a territory of the United States (Arnold 1976, 24). The Treaty ushered in an era dominated by “English only” attitudes. Krauss (1980, 18) refers to this period as the “American Period.” The purchase of Alaska brought changes to the new territory that had particularly detrimental effects on the Alutiiq language. Many scholars argue that government policies, most specifically educational policy, during this time period deliberately attempted to eradicate Alaska Native languages (Alton 1998). For a more complete narrative about the English only period, please reference Alton (1998); Arnold (1976); Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005); Crowell, Steffian and Pullar (2001); Drabek (2009, 2012); Hegna (2004); Krauss (1980).

2.4 Moving Forward and the Alutiiq Renaissance

What Drabek (2009, 8) calls the “Alutiiq Renaissance” began just prior to the passage of the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971. Discussions surrounding ANCSA’s passage contributed significantly to the Alutiiq Renaissance by rekindling Alutiiq identity and pride (Crowell, Steffian, and Pullar 2001, 85). The newfound sense of pride created a pan-Alutiiq movement to protect, and share traditional ways of life and knowledge.

Since the late 1970s, a number of materials and movements working towards linguistic and cultural revitalization have been created and observed around Kodiak. In the 1980s a curriculum for high school and college level Alutiiq language classes was developed, Dr. Jeff Leer's Koniag Alutiiq Dictionary was published in 1978, and an Alutiiq grammar to accompany it was published in 1990. The Alutiiq Museum was founded in 1995; and the Kodiak Alutiiq Language Revitalization Program managed by the Alutiiq Museum started in the fall of 2007 (Counciller 2010, 1; Drabek 2009, 12). Part of the Alutiiq Museum's initiative was the formation of the New Words Council, which began in 2007 through a National Science Foundation grant with continued funding through 2010. Native Village of Afognak (NVA) has continued to expand language initiatives through a three year Administration of Native Americans grant awarded in 2011. There are also formal classroom opportunities to learn Alutiiq in both the local high school, and through Kodiak College. Efforts and products were initially few at the beginning of the "Alutiiq Renaissance" in the late 1970s. However, efforts and products have increased in the latter parts of this period.

Even though each era is defined through distinct experiences of colonization, each era of colonization also has elements that bind them together into a contiguous whole. Each phase of colonization has worked to "control indigenous lands and populations" (Weenie 2000, 66) in some way, through either enslavement as sea otter hunters during the Darkest Period, converts to Russian Orthodoxy during the Golden Age, English speaking pupils during the English Only period, or through more covert measures during the Alutiiq Renaissance where mainstream, ideas of white supremacy have continued to

be largely sustained through “education, imperialism, and capitalism” (Weenie 2000, 66). Although Weenie (2000) does not discuss Kodiak’s colonial experience in particular, she argues the ways colonization has impacted all Indigenous peoples through similar tools, and mechanisms including “education, imperialism, and capitalism.” Each phase of colonization on Kodiak has used schools, governments, and capitalism to further justify colonizers as advanced and civilized, “while the colonized are depicted as backward nations” (Weenie 2000, 66). In this way, colonization has been a tool to normalize Alutiiq people to an either Russian or American standard and norm.

2.5 Language Club

The Language Club was started in 2003 as a part of the Alutiiq Museum’s Master-Apprentice Project. The Master-Apprentice project aimed at using the Master-Apprentice model initially developed and pioneered by Hinton to facilitate apprentices (learners) in learning their language (Hinton, Vera, and Steele 2002). Hinton’s method aims at creating a one-on-one immersion setting between language speakers and learners where language can be learned “informally, through listening, speaking, and eliciting language” (Hinton, Vera, and Steele 2002, 7). Language Club began as a place for masters (Elders) and apprentices (learners) participating in the Master-Apprentice project to get together, catch up with one another, troubleshoot areas of difficulty, see one another, and teach and learn Alutiiq. At that time, Language Club participants were compensated for their time spent together. Funding was dropped at the end of the Alutiiq Museum’s Master-

Apprentice Project in 2007, and Language Club has been largely unfunded since (St. John personal communication 2013).

Since funding ceased Elders have been sporadically compensated when a participant is working on a specific funded project. For example, during the writing of *The Alutiiq Orthography: Kodiak Dialect* (Counciller and Leer 2012), Dr. Counciller would bring questions or word examples to Language Club for consideration. During those meetings, Elders were compensated for their time because the work was focused on a specific, funded product. However, monetary compensation for attending or participating in Language Club is uncommon, but other forms of compensation are more common, like helping an Elder run errands, buying them lunch or a coffee before or after Language Club, or other forms of more traditional, informal compensation. Informal Elder compensation is difficult to account for, and is therefore not easily factored into measurements of Elder compensation.

Language Club meets every Wednesday at noon in the conference room attached to Sun'aq Tribe's office space in downtown Kodiak. Sun'aq Tribe does not support Language Club financially, aside from offering space and a fresh pot of coffee every week. Participation varies widely from week to week. Some weeks may see only one or two individuals attend, while other weeks are full, with upwards of 25 participants in attendance. Language Club is open to anyone wishing to participate, and has been this way since my first attendance in 2009. There is no weekly agenda, and learners usually bring something to fill the hour-long gatherings. Learners may bring games, cards, props, translation questions, etc.; or they may just catch up with what other club members have

been doing. Often, these discussions and activities are attempted in Alutiiq, depending on the proficiency of those in attendance. Participant demographics are diverse: ages range from infant to 70 when accounting for those who bring babies or children to Language Club, including both male and female, Native and non-Native participants. The educational attainment of participants ranges from grade school up to Ph.D. For further discussion of Language Club see the discussion in section 4.5.2, and the discussion of participants in section 4.5.3.

2.6 Summary

This chapter gave a brief narrative of Alutiiq history and Alutiiq language status. The discussion defined how the term Alutiiq will be used throughout the thesis to reference both the Alutiiq people of Kodiak Island, as well as the Alutiiq language. The discussion then focused on the current status of the Alutiiq language. Referencing Fishman's (1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), I attempted to highlight the gravity of Alutiiq being lost to the community by referencing the current status as stage 8 (Counciller and Leer 2012, 7). A language experiencing stage 8 has a language community comprised of Elders, who have few others to communicate with. The chapter also outlined phases of language loss, including the Darkest Period, the Golden Age, and the English Only era. These phases attempted to give the reader a brief history of language loss leading up to the Alutiiq Renaissance. The discussion then turned to the roots of Language Club to outline general attributes of Language Club and basic demographics of those who attend.

3.0 Language Policy, Planning, and Shift

This chapter will begin with a discussion about language policy and language planning. Definitions for these terms will be discussed and narrowed to present definitions most appropriate for this research. Following the definitions of language policy and planning, factors leading to language shift in Kodiak will be outlined. Colonization will be a foundational element to this discussion, with three outcomes that I argue have undermined the survivance of Alutiiq, including Westernization, social change, and dislocation. Finally, the discussion will present an argument about how language policy and planning structures have both undermined and upheld the Alutiiq language.

3.1 Language Policy and Language Planning

The discussion surrounding language policy and language planning will open with an overview of general definitions and how each term will be used in this research. My understandings of these definitions are important when considering that clear distinctions between what defines language policy or language planning are not readily observed through the literature (Baldauf 2006, 149). Nor does a single, succinct, agreed upon definition for these two terms exist (Cooper 1989, 29). Because of the inconsistent usage of terms in the literature, slight definition variations will be presented, followed by an argument for the variation I will be using throughout this research.

Language planning is commonly understood as deliberate, conscious efforts to impact the structure and function of a language, or language varieties. Examples of

language planning products could include the creation of orthographies, language standardization or modernization, or making specific space for languages within particular social functions (Tollefson 1991, 16; Paulston 1994, 5). Language planning may therefore be understood as future-oriented action taken on by governments or a community of speakers with an aim at impacting society (Baldauf 2006, 148). Planned impacts on languages usually encompass “four aspects: status planning (about society), corpus planning (about language), language-in-education (or acquisition) planning (about learning), and (most recently) prestige planning (about image)” (Baldauf 2006, 147). Hinton (2001, 52-53) provides a similar definition of language planning, but substitutes “writing” as a category, instead of “prestige.” Although individual authors may include additional terms to their definition of language planning, acquisition planning, status planning, and corpus planning are most often used to define language planning. Cooper (1989, 45) argues that language planning in action must make “*deliberate efforts to influence the behavior*” (italics original) of individuals or groups through planning efforts. I agree with Cooper’s (1989, 45) argument that influencing language behaviors and perceptions is a critical attribute of language planning. From my perspective, influencing a group would necessitate a strong community focus that offers room for language communities to interpret planning initiatives to meet their own goals and objectives.

So why is language planning important? Simply put, language planning is important because it guides people to use a specific language(s) in specific domains.

In the case of this research, Alutiiq language revitalization initiatives as a whole constitute language-planning efforts. Language Club is a product of language revitalization initiatives and an attempt at acquisition planning, for example. More important to the context of this research, Hinton (2001, 51) argues that language planning is important because it fosters a thought process and a research opportunity that helps set reasonable goals for a community engaged in deliberate planning efforts. Language planning focuses planners to consider the “big picture” while working toward long-term goals. Similarly, planning at a local level offers greater space for a community to remain in control of their language initiatives. Community language planning initiatives also have the potential to help prevent fragmentation and rivalry during language revitalization efforts by helping to coordinate and maximize energy and efforts of those involved. Making language-planning initiatives explicit can ensure that goals and perspectives are visible.

Language policy, on the other hand, is a course of action or proposed course of action that usually reflects the values of those in power (Tollefson 1991, 16; Paulston 1994, 5). Language policy that reflects the values of those in power has historically been used as a “tool for the oppression of minority languages” (Hinton 2001, 39). However, Hinton (2001) argues that language policy can also simultaneously serve “as a tool for their (minority languages) survival and public enhancement” (39) by allocating funds or resources to marginalized languages in order to foster their revitalization. Understanding the ways language policy has both the potential to undermine and to uphold minority languages poses difficulties. However, one may better understand this idea by

considering that language policy studies normally focus solely on overt policy (Schiffman 1996, 13). By focusing on overt language policy alone, a discussion is left incomplete since language policy may either be covert, or overt in nature. Covert language policy is assumed and unwritten, whereas overt language policy is written down, and may be read as a document or piece of legislation, for example. The use of the term “covert” in this context does not denote an intent to obscure; instead the use of “covert” by language policy scholars like Schiffman (1996, 15) attempts to describe the ways language policy in the USA are “not neutral.” Instead, Schiffman (1996) argues that covert language policy in the USA automatically “*favours* the English language” (italics original). Therefore, use of the term “covert” in this language policy discussion borrows from Schiffman’s (1996) work and adopts the use of covert to reference an assumed stance by those in power of the roles and values languages possess. By considering only overt language policy, scholarship often offers a limited perspective.

Schiffman (1996, 276), attempts to consider both overt and covert language policy by framing language policy as a social construct rooted in linguistic culture. Linguistic culture here references social norms, attitudes, and assumptions about language, and the ways in which societies or groups respond to languages (either majority or minority languages) based on these norms, attitudes, and assumptions (Schiffman 1996). Tollefson (1991, 12) reflects on linguistic culture in the United States by observing the opposition to multilingualism, where speaking standard American English is what defines being an “American.” Those who do not speak standard American English may be denied political rights, opportunities, and social equality. Gaining a

foothold in the US language community requires adherence to a specific language, more than a specific ethnic background (Tollefson 1991). Authenticity is therefore represented through language use (Pujolar 2007). These underlying beliefs about language are what define linguistic culture (Schiffman 1996).

Language policies rooted in linguistic culture therefore reflect specific values that are acted upon intentionally and strategically to impact language use and status. Understanding social conditions that foster language policies enables us to better predict potential outcomes (Paulston 1994, 6), and also helps us understand how language policies can be a cause of language shift, or can further language shift. A more in depth discussion of language shift and Alutiiq will be given below in section 3.3, but it is important to highlight that policies and plans have the potential to either uphold language, or undermine language activities and uses.

The above discussion attempted to define language planning and policy while simultaneously pointing to the fluidity of the definitions throughout the literature. The objective of the above discussion was not only to display that a succinct definition for either term is lacking, but to also highlight how the terms can be interchanged.

Ultimately, my understanding of language policy and planning hinge on the following definitions: 1) Language planning is a deliberate effort to influence the behavior of others regarding acquisition, structure, and function of language codes; 2) Language policy is a social construct rooted in linguistic culture reflecting specific economic and social structures. Language policy rooted in linguistic culture impacts language practices, altering the ways language use is manifest in social, historical, political and discursive

fora (Pennycook 2010). The understanding of these terms is deliberately rather broad in an attempt to incorporate and consider myriad factors when assessing their influences on Alutiiq.

The discussion thus far has outlined ways that language policy and planning may either undermine, or uphold marginalized languages. Tollefson (1991, 16), Paulston (1994, 5), and Hinton (2001, 39) argue that language policy has the potential to undermine minority languages by reflecting the values of those in power, potentially turning policy into a tool of oppression. Hinton (2001, 39) also argues that policy has the potential to uphold minority languages by serving as a “tool” for a minority language’s “survival and public enhancement” through acquisition planning efforts like the Language Club, for example. I will now turn to a discussion of the role of language policy and planning in the Kodiak context.

3.2 Micro-Language Planning

Using these definitions of language policy and planning we may now begin to assess the ways they positively and negatively impact Alutiiq. Examining policies based on their community impacts and implementation schemes will help reveal the positive and negative attributes of planning and policy. Baldauf (2006) posits that considering how macro, meso, and micro policy schemes play out in a given context is what will most clearly reveal the positive and negative attributes of language planning and policy. Considering these facets helps understand how or if policy works, and engages communities to understand their effectiveness (Baldauf 2006, 164). Attempting to

understand policy from the perspective of the communities it impacts is what Baldauf (2006, 164) would classify as looking at the “ecology” of policy.

To look at the “ecology” of policy, we need to examine how micro approaches to language policy and planning manifest in their environments. Micro-level language policy and planning is an ecological perspective that inherently examines and considers relationships, and other dynamic, localized activities as part of its definition (Baldauf 2006, 153). Baldauf (2006) argues that a micro-level approach to policy and planning is necessary for effective language planning and maintenance because “language planning has to engage and reflect local oral traditions and local social structures” (164). Similarly, “micro approaches to language planning favor the preservation of dialectal diversity within the broader pursuit of promoting endangered languages” (Tulloch 2006, 269). This is because micro-level approaches are locally driven, context specific, and aim at giving speakers and participants agency (Tulloch 2006, 269). Micro approaches enable the responsibility of language policy to lie in the hands of the speech community itself (Tulloch 2006, 272). Inherently adopting local speakers’ goals and practices in language preservation is a central tenet to micro planning and policy.

It is important to note that micro approaches to policy and planning align with the definitions of language planning and language policy outlined above, where language planning includes deliberate efforts to influence language behavior. And language policy is defined as a social construct rooted in linguistic culture that reflects specific values. Similarly, micro-level planning and policy creates formal space for localized language attitudes and representations (local linguistic culture) to emerge (Baldauf 2006, 152)

through attempts to influence local language behavior or attitudes. A micro-level approach in this way helps mitigate against policy misfit, which historically has been the case in language policy and planning contexts (Lomawaima and McCarty 2002). Creating policy and planning that is representative of local voices and perspectives has the potential to foster policy sustainability and effectiveness through its inherent contextual qualities (Lejano and Shankar 2012; Meek 2013; Pennycook 2010). This type of policy also has the potential to create a planning and policy environment that is congruent with formal policy, which would create the perception of “greater policy fairness, inclusiveness and effectiveness” (Meek 2013, 23).

Creating micro-level policy and planning structures therefore should not only reflect local linguistic culture, but should also reflect the relationships needed to build relevant micro-policy. Although the important role of relationships will be further discussed in the theory and methods discussion in chapter 4, it is nevertheless important to recognize that micro-level planning and policy models reflect community objectives and goals. Outcomes of micro-level policy have the potential to embody multi-faceted positive attributes. First, micro-level policy creates the opportunity for bottom-up policy and planning initiatives that consider local, contextualized perspectives, voices, and agency. Second, it has the potential to create better policy “fit” that will be representative of the community’s needs, creating a perception of micro policy fairness, effectiveness and inclusiveness. Finally, this type of policy and planning implementation could lead to empowering community members and initiatives, offering broader space for voice and

agency both locally and regionally. In this way micro policies and plans can be a mechanism to address language shift locally.

Despite these potential positive outcomes of micro policies or plans, there are still limiting factors. Top-down policies that influence education, broader social or economic contexts, for example, may prove to be too powerful for micro-level policy and planning initiatives to tackle. Although community policies and plans may be empowering exercises, they will not be able to easily tackle state or federal policies that could restrict a community's desires to grow in ways they explicitly define. In this way, top-down restrictions may hinder continued motivation and progress. It is not certain that micro-level planning and policy creation strategies would be strong enough to impact broader policy and planning networks.

The following discussion will outline ways language policy and planning have both contributed to the decline of Alutiiq, as well as revitalizing Alutiiq. The discussion will require the reader to keep in mind the succinct definitions of language policy and language planning, where: 1) Language planning is a deliberate effort to influence the behavior of others regarding acquisition, structure, and function of language codes; 2) Language policy is a social construct rooted in linguistic culture that reflects specific economic and social structures. Keeping these definitions in mind, we will see how policy has led to language shift through shifts in linguistic culture throughout history in and around Kodiak. Similarly, we will see how language plans have attempted to influence the behavior of community members regarding acquisition of Alutiiq.

3.3 Factors Leading to Language Shift

In the following paragraphs I will argue the act of European colonization (first by Russians and later European Americans) caused language shift for Alutiiq people.

The online Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines colonialism as “a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another” (Colonialism, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Weenie (2000, 65) builds upon this definition and says that “[c]olonialism is manifested through the ‘configurations of power’ that worked and still work to control Indigenous lands and populations.” Through domination and subjugation, those in power gain control over, or colonize indigenous populations and lands. For Brayboy (2006, 430), colonization continues to be maintained today through “European American thought, knowledge, and power structures [that] dominate present-day society in the United States.” Decolonization therefore may be defined as the undoing of colonialism, or to follow Brayboy (2006), Weenie (2000), Smith (1999) and others, creating space for non-European American (e.g., Alutiiq) thought, knowledge and power structures.

As discussed in sections 2.3 and 2.4, European colonization of the Alutiiq may be divided into three broad periods often called the Darkest Period (1784-1818), Golden Age (1818-1867) and English Only (1867-1970s). The first of these, the Darkest Period, was largely defined by overt racism, discrimination, and intimidation. The Darkest Period saw Alutiiq people controlled, subjugated, intimidated into submission, and enslaved by Russians (Crowell, Steffian, and Pullar 2001, 54-60; Miller 2010). Although the Golden Age saw a positivist approach to multi-lingualism, racism and discrimination remained.

For example, rights as a Russian citizen were granted only once baptized into the Russian Orthodox Church (Drabek 2009, 6). In this way, the Orthodox Church served as a powerful tool for colonization. Overt racism and colonization continued under American rule during the English Only period. Multi-lingualism was often banned in public settings controlled by whites (e.g., schools and Protestant churches), and “opportunity” was tied to education in English and affiliation with Protestant churches rather than Russian Orthodoxy (Crowell, Steffian, and Pullar 2001, 62-69). Thus, while each period experienced its own forms of colonization, each was marked by common threads of overt racism, discrimination and intimidation. Over time, colonization undermined the ability for Alutiiq language and culture to either maintain the status quo, or in latter eras, simply to survive.

The following sub-sections will outline how colonialism has contributed to Alutiiq language shift. Fishman (1991, 1) argues that the destabilization of intergenerational continuity in language communities creates an environment where language users and uses diminish, and eventually become lost. By outlining three outcomes of colonization that illustrate the colonial experience of Kodiak, I hope to offer localized examples of how intergenerational continuity has been interrupted throughout Kodiak Island’s history. The three outcomes to be discussed are Westernization, social change, and dislocation. I will argue that these elements not only altered the lived experiences of Alutiiq peoples, but ultimately adjusted local and regional linguistic culture, changing the landscape of Alutiiq language use and prestige.

3.3.1 Westernization

Westernization began with initial contact between Alutiiqs and Russians. Miller (2010) describes the many ways Russian contact altered local economic, social, cultural, and political structures across the island. These structures were altered through educational approaches, foreign commercial expectations, and a new religion, for example (Oleksa 2005). Through significant social upheavals, Russian contact weakened the social fabric enabling the United States to further undermine Alutiiq language and culture. Greater evidence of American impacts are outlined by Alton (1998) who presents a narrative of American rule that deeply disrupted economic, social, political, and linguistic structures all across the state of Alaska, including Kodiak. Through disruption of economic structures, social, political and cultural norms were forever changed as Western constructs seeped into Alutiiq communities.

Hagège (2009, 110) describes the ways economic influences remove Indigenous peoples from traditional occupations, while simultaneously shifting traditional language usage surrounding said occupations and practices. As local economic patterns change, pertinent language associated with economic events, practices, or traditions change, and often fall to the wayside (Hagège 2009, 116). Traditional economic structures may disintegrate when outside influences impact communities, since they often bring divergent social and economic patterns.

Converting to more powerful economic structures offers prestige and social status. Gaining broader economic status under foreign constructs would not likely be achieved without adopting the language of prestige and economic status. Hagège (2009,

133) discusses how striving for prestige under foreign rule alone has the capacity to facilitate a shift from Indigenous peoples' traditional languages. He argues that a transition from traditional occupations into a colonial market fosters the perceived need for the establishment of a *lingua franca*, further deepening language shift (Ibid., 140).

Evidence of such economic impacts on the Alutiiq language is visible throughout Kodiak history. Hegna (2004, 33) describes language shift in the villages of Karluk and Larsen Bay immediately following the American purchase of Alaska in 1867. Hegna (2004, 33) highlights how these two villages were home to the largest salmon fisheries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and canneries were located in the immediate vicinity of the two communities. With the rise of productive canneries in the villages of Karluk and Larsen Bay, immense linguistic pressure was put on Alutiiq residents (Hegna 2004, 34). At the time, English was the ticket to moving into positions with higher wages. Greater opportunities to earn money and advance economically incentivized English acquisition in ways not observed in other communities. Hegna's (2004) example articulates the correlation between Westernizing influences and language shift in the Kodiak region. The example shows how colonial practices brought Western values and influences into the villages of Karluk and Larsen Bay disrupting economic, social, and linguistic structures.

Hegna (2004, 33-34) observes that Kodiak communities with less social and economic impact (i.e. no canneries) experienced less language shift. Hegna's observation leads me to believe that under American rule, English was essential to participate in broader economic systems. Ó Riagáin (1997, 28-42) also points toward a correlation

between economic factors and Irish language shift, leading the reader to conclude that language will, most likely, shift to the language of prestige, clout, and economic power where broader markets and opportunity exist (Paulston 1994). In the example of Karluk and Larsen Bay, language shift occurred more rapidly as locals responded to economic incentives offered through local fisheries.

Evidence of the correlation between economic influences and language shift are still relevant when looking at Alutiiq language exposure around the Kodiak Archipelago in the early 2000s. Hegna's (2004) survey indicates that people in rural communities were "more likely to have: 1) heard the language growing up, 2) parents that spoke Alutiiq, 3) spoke the language themselves before they attended school, and 4) to use some Alutiiq words in their homes now" (29). Hegna's (2004, 29) observation demonstrates how small communities with local economies and more traditional social structures have experienced slower rates of language shift around Kodiak; for example, communities with a greater focus on subsistence economies and greater intergenerational contact have lesser degrees of language shift.

Rural contexts also continue to have different, more traditional occupational opportunities. Although such opportunities may be limited, they are likely to be further distanced from hegemonic influences. Ó Riagáin (1997, 38) discusses how in the case of Irish language shift, when people moved out of rural settings and into urban environments in search of greater opportunity, employment options shaped choices of residential locations, community settings, and language uses. He argues that language use

continues to change through such migration; migration limits space for maintaining what was once traditional.

3.3.2 Social Change

Westernization, as discussed above, has the potential to contribute to language shift resulting in social change. Social change then further undermines traditional language patterns and resilience. Oversimplifying myriad contributions, Fishman summarizes how “[l]anguage shift is a by-product of unequal rates of social change” (1991, 6). Dramatic changes in social patterns create a disconnect between generations, which could potentially divide Elders from youth as their worldviews become divergent as local realities quickly change. Black (2001, 60) recognized this phenomenon regarding Alutiiq literacy in her essay Forgotten Literacy, where she examines how during the early to mid-1800s some Alutiiqs were fully bilingual and literate in Russian and Alutiiq. Some time after the Treaty of Cession in 1867, literacy and multi-lingualism transitioned into a relic of the past. Black (2001, 61) notes that within a generation of the Treaty of Cession, the struggle to preserve bilingualism, and particularly Alutiiq, was a losing battle. Black’s (2001) observation that bilingualism was dramatically altered within a generation of American colonization indicates swift social changes under American influence occurring over a relatively short period of time.

Hagège (2009) argues that a history of dramatic social change is not unique, but has occurred in many regions around the world. Cases across Alaska point to dramatic change in social climate when Native languages “were portrayed as diabolical creations,

and any impulse to use them was expelled through fear” (Hagège 2009, 124). Where Native languages were once the only languages used in communities and families across Alaska, they were soon hidden after the Treaty of Cession in 1867 (Alton 1998). Social change of this fashion has in some cases branded traditional languages as points of shame for people and communities (Hagège 2009, 136-137). Applying Hagège’s (2009) and Alton’s (1998) arguments to the Kodiak context, I argue that social changes and Westernizing trends not only devalued the Alutiiq language, but also marginalized Alutiiq language and culture. American educational approaches and policies facilitated the greatest amount of language suppression (Alton 1998; Crowell, Steffian, and Pullar 2001; Drabek 2012).

Ultimately, synthesizing the arguments thus far, Westernization and social change ultimately destabilize language communities and contexts creating dislocation from a traditional past, homelands, social, and cultural norms. Westernization, social change, and dislocation are all products of colonialism, which ultimately lead to a shift in language use. Westernization and colonialism lead to increased interactions between dominant and peripheral groups bringing impacts on the weak from the strong (Miller 2010; Alton 1998; Hagège 2009; Fishman 1991). Fishman (1991, 63) observes that these factors also open access to goods, services and commodities, making dominant culture endemic and omnipresent.

Engaging in conscious and forced language shift is both a product of social change, as well as furthers social change. Schiffman (1996) notes that “language[s] do not ...reflect social structure, they *are* social structure; they do not reflect power, they *are*

power” (214) (*italics original*). This echoes Fishman’s (1991, 22) observation regarding the symbolic links between language, power, and prestige. Dramatic social changes, like an imposed schooling or religious structure, have the potential to require certain linguistic groups to choose between using an emergent dominant language in order to gain social status and capital, or to be “left behind” or punished for using a marginalized, traditional language. Speakers may decide to use a language other than their traditional language because they wish not to be affiliated with the dying, or marginalized language. Or they may perceive greater rewards through the acquisition of the dominant language. This illustrates Schiffman’s (1996) observation about language *being* power. Association with power as opposed to being affiliated with the dying, or marginalized will often motivate a switch to the dominant language, bringing greater social, political, and economic rewards. The choice to move away from a marginalized language is therefore closely linked to negative symbolism attached to the marginalized language. The traditional language under colonial influences may symbolize backwardness or ostracism, carrying with it negative stigmas while the dominant language is tied to reward and progress (Fishman 1991, 23; Hegna 2004, 29; Alton 1998, 47; Schiffman 1996).

Social change therefore backs communities into a metaphorical corner, where they must act on new social paradigms. Dramatic social changes under hegemonic influences often times limit opportunities for linguistic diversity, pushing non-dominant languages into decline (Fishman 1991, 62; Schiffman 1996, 213; Cooper 1989, 86). However, Fishman (1991, 35) argues that attempts to reverse the impacts of language

shift at the community level may alter, or slow the course of language loss by “re-establishing local options, local control, local hope and local meaning to life.”

3.3.3 Dislocation

Fishman (1991, 6) argues that regional languages are the most lexically appropriate for their surroundings because they reflect the rich, insightful approaches to understanding the environments in which they evolved. Using language that is specifically tailored to a linguistic group’s surroundings creates continuity between people and their environment. However, local languages can be metaphorically, and literally dislocated from traditional environments through colonization, Westernization, and social changes.

Ó Riagáin (1997, 34) argues that altering social paradigms in Ireland greatly increased the likelihood of language shift in communities. When a linguistic group becomes physically, emotionally, or ideologically dislocated from historic norms, shift seems inevitable. Hagège (2009, 123) touches on the idea of dislocation by describing a common scenario in American Indian and Alaska Native contexts when the federal government established explicit measures to ensure that Indian children were removed from the “‘barbaric’ influence of their native environments” and transferred to boarding schools far from their villages. Dislocation of individuals, and whole communities undermines cultural and societal norms, which in turn tips the scales toward language shift. In this way, social change and dislocation are often times simultaneously observed and impact one another. Social change gives rise to factors that may cause both physical

and metaphorical dislocation leaving greater social change in their wake. In the case of Alutiiq history, physical and metaphorical dislocation has led to dramatic social change. Physical dislocation through educational policies and structures continues to be identified by Elders today as a mechanism used to diminish Alutiiq.

3.4 Language Policy and Planning and Language Shift

Thus far I have demonstrated that language shift is real and quantifiable, and I have identified contributing factors to the Kodiak context. However, a discussion about how language shift is influenced by language policies and language plans has yet to be outlined. This section will articulate what I identify as the irony of language policy and planning within the Kodiak context. On one hand language policies have arguably undermined the survival of Alutiiq through shifts in regional linguistic culture, and through policies that undermine Alutiiq. On the other hand, I will describe how community language plans and policies serve as a mechanism to respond to Alutiiq language shift. Community language plans are evidenced through deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others regarding acquisition, structure, and the functions of Alutiiq in the community. The irony of how language policy and planning has both undermined and bolstered Alutiiq will be discussed below. First, let us turn to the ways policy has undermined Alutiiq.

In the above sections about Westernization, social change, and dislocation, I outlined how Alutiiq has been devalued and marginalized through social, and economic changes. These changes have impacted, and continue to impact the ways Alutiiq is

envisioned. As demonstrated in section 3.3.2 Social Change, Alutiiq has been largely marginalized through social change by means of economic development, changes in education, economic structures, and valued knowledge, for example. Social changes made Alutiiq speakers choose between using an emergent dominant language, tied to social status and capital, or continue using their now marginalized language (Alutiiq). This example, among others described above, articulates an altered regional linguistic culture, social norms, attitudes, and assumptions about language, and the ways in which societies or groups respond to these norms, attitudes, and assumptions. Based on an altered regional linguistic culture, individuals responded to a new set of norms, attitudes, and assumptions about Alutiiq, which led to a shift in usage. Although this is not an example of explicit policy that directed language use to change, this example attempts to display how language policy functions as a social construct rooted in linguistic culture, which reflects specific economic and social structures.

Similarly, there are examples of explicit policies that undermine the survival of Alutiiq. As Alton (1998) argues in a general Alaska context, evidence seems to point toward government policies that deliberately attempted to eradicate Alaska Native languages through schooling. Specifically between the 1880s and 1960s state and federal agencies organized curricula that were inherently grounded in English language and a Western perspective. Even if parents were reluctant to send their children to school, many were required to comply. In this way, the education system impacted communities and languages through a required, Western, assimilationist education system with a clear anti-Native language perspective built into its policy structure (Krauss 1980, 95). These

attributes directly fed into the process of language shift in Alaska Native communities. It is important to note how explicit educational policies have undermined Alutiiq. Both the example of linguistic culture, and explicit policies have contributed to Alutiiq language shift.

Conversely, language policy and planning have also functioned as a mechanism for the community to respond to language shift. Referencing back to section 2.4 Moving Forward and the Alutiiq Renaissance we can see examples of language planning aimed at Alutiiq revitalization. Examples from section 2.4 including the Koniag Alutiiq Dictionary (Leer 1978), accompanying Koniag Alutiiq grammar (Leer 1990), and the Kodiak Alutiiq Language Revitalization Program managed by the Alutiiq Museum (Counciller 2010, 1; Drabek 2009, 12), align with definitions of acquisition planning. Similar language planning efforts continue today, as exemplified by the recent Alutiiq orthography published in 2012 (Counciller and Leer 2012). Possibly the most relevant language planning initiative to consider for this research is the Language Club itself. Language Club is a clear example of acquisition planning, considering an assumed outcome of Language Club is increased Alutiiq competency through participation. Language Club in theory is part of a community effort to reverse language shift. Reversing language shift requires the creation of new Alutiiq speakers, which requires acquisition planning on behalf of the community. Language Club is a product of community acquisition planning.

3.5 Summary

This chapter has introduced definitions of language policy and planning as related to this research. Similarly, Westernization, social change, and dislocation were presented as central to language shift experienced in the Alutiiq region. The discussion then demonstrated how language shift has been a product of language policy and planning, as well as how language shift has been combated through language policy and planning. The following chapter will articulate exactly how Language Club keeps members returning to participate.

4.0 Theories and Methods, and Research Design

The two theories I am drawing from are tribal critical race theory (TribalCrit) and constructivist grounded theory (CGT). TribalCrit focuses on the impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples and was central to data analysis. Constructivist grounded theory denies an absolute truth or knowledge, and instead uses research as an opportunity to create knowledge between researcher and participants. CGT was critical throughout the data collection process and initial analysis of findings. The following sections will discuss the pertinent attributes of each theory and will then focus on how action research (AR) as a method resonates with TribalCrit and CGT.

4.1.1 TribalCrit

TribalCrit derives from critical race theory, which derives from critical theory. Critical theory examines social inequality and aims at creating space for positive social change (Carspecken 1996, 3). Focusing research on social inequality and positive change requires researchers to take a specific perspective (Rangel 2012; Wright 2004, 166). Critical theorists do not believe that neutrality in research is possible; therefore critical theorists must define the specifics of their perspectives by including background and positionality. Reflecting on the ways perspectives, backgrounds, or positionality influences research helps the researcher consider the ways power, social structure, cultural attributes, and human agency influence research (Carspecken 1996, 3). Adhering to a strict methodological school of thought would limit the abilities of critical researchers to consider the ways power, social structure, cultural attributes, and human

agency influence research. Therefore, a critical theorist must aim to “marry the empiricism of the social sciences with morality” (Wright 2004, 166). Ultimately, critical theory focuses research on social inequalities and working toward positive social change.

Critical race theory (CRT) takes critical theory’s orientation and applies it to issues of race and racism. CRT explicitly aims at creating space for minority peoples to have voice (Kincheloe 2008, 48; Writer 2008, 3). According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001, 7) there are three central tenets to CRT. First, racism is ordinary; it is therefore difficult to cure or address. Racism is common and exists in all our lives; nobody is isolated from racism. Curing racism is difficult because of its ubiquity and the diverse ways it is experienced. Second, “white-over-color” serves to maintain the status quo, where “white” has power over “color.” Attempting to change these power structures is difficult. Insisting on equal treatment can only serve to mitigate the most obvious forms of racism (Delgado and Stefancic 2001, 7) because unequal treatment is rooted in the existing social structure, which maintains “white-over-color.” Racism that is plainly obvious can be addressed. Addressing overt racism does not imply, however, that there will be a shift in power dynamics or social structure. Instead addressing obvious forms of racism simply creates the illusion of equality between “white” and “color”. Third, race and races are products of social thought and relations. Racial categories are invented, manipulated, and retired, not static or natural (Delgado and Stefancic 2012, 8). Since racism is socially constructed it has the potential to be changed and deconstructed. CRT therefore aims at focusing research on issues of race and racism so that they may be changed or deconstructed.

TribalCrit takes CRTs acknowledgment of racism a step further and emphasizes the role colonization has played in the lives of Indigenous peoples (Brayboy 2006, 430; Rangel 2012, 38). In Brayboy's (2006) outline of Tribal Critical Race Theory, he defines nine tenets of TribalCrit.

- 1. Colonization is endemic to society.**
2. U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.
4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.
- 5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.**
6. Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.
7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.
- 8. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.**
- 9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change.**

Although each tenet holds value in this research, I will discuss tenets 1, 5, 8, and 9 (bolded above) because they have most directly influenced my thinking and this research.

First, TribalCrit recognizes how “colonization is endemic to society” (Brayboy 2006, 429). Brayboy (2006, 430) defines colonization as “European American thought, knowledge, and power structures [that] dominate present-day society in the United States.” This definition of colonization incorporates the ways social, cultural and linguistic patterns are altered with an aim at homogenization. These patterns of colonization are ubiquitous in U.S. society (Writer 2008, 3; Brayboy 2006, 430; Smith 1999, 58-72) and have undermined Indigenous sovereignty through domination of social, cultural, and linguistic patterns (Nabakov 1999). For example, looking at the Kodiak context Crowell, Steffian, and Pullar (2001, 54-69) describe the ways colonization has led to the loss of political sovereignty, loss of language primarily through English only boarding schools, and dramatic economic change through the fur trade and fisheries. Loss of political sovereignty initially came from the influence of the Russian American Company (RAC) who commanded much of the Alutiiq population to work for the Company in some way. Often times work was dangerous and far from home. Those left at home were unable to make ends meet as their focus shifted from traditional subsistence practices to working for the RAC.

Later, American colonialism introduced mission boarding schools that sought to make its pupils English-speaking Americans, who aligned with Protestant beliefs (Alton 1998). The Baptist Mission on Woody Island, near the town of Kodiak, for example, was criticized for taking children from their homes to accomplish this objective (Crowell,

Steffian, and Pullar 2001, 66). Working for RAC during the Russian era, and the influences of canneries during the American era brought economic change. The canneries were described as destabilizing for Alutiiq communities (Hegna 2004, 33). Companies would bring in Scandinavians and Italians to fish, and Chinese and other Asian laborers to process. Canneries therefore left Alutiiq villages overwhelmed by foreigners, and their streams overfished. The examples of colonial impacts described by Crowell, Steffian, and Pullar (2001, 54-69) illustrates how colonization has ultimately undermined Alutiiq rights and sovereignty (For more detail on the colonial impacts on Kodiak see: Crowell, Steffian, and Pullar 2001; Miller 2010). Although these brief examples are historical in nature, their impacts echo today, demonstrating the interconnectedness of a location's past and present. For example, the difficulties between balancing a traditional lifestyle with the economic necessity to engage in wage employment continue to impact Alutiiq communities. TribalCrit asks that research consider the ways past and present colonization and assimilation have impacted, and continue to impact, Indigenous peoples throughout history (Castagno and Lee 2007, 7; Daniels 2011, 216).

Second, TribalCrit claims that when “concepts of culture, knowledge, and power” are “examined through an Indigenous lens” they “take on new meaning” (Brayboy 2006, 429). A TribalCrit Indigenous lens "problematizes the concepts of culture, knowledge, and power" by offering an alternative not rooted in Western or European notions, but in Indigenous notions of culture, knowledge, and power (Brayboy 2006, 434). Brayboy ultimately argues: “that no research should be conducted with Indigenous Peoples that is not in some way directed by a community and aimed toward improving the life chances

and situations of specific communities and American Indians writ large. The research must be relevant and address the problems of the community... "(2006, 440).

"Research examined through an Indigenous lens" as defined by Brayboy (2006) cannot be objective or neutral. Smith (1999, 137), argues that "objective" and "neutral" research has historically taken research out of communities, and created unusable, often misleading products. Examining concepts of culture, power, and knowledge through an Indigenous lens, opens opportunities for research to "take on new meaning" by creating products that are meaningful to communities, instead of "objective" or "neutral."

Third, "stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being" (Brayboy 2006, 430). "Stories" are central to Alutiiq culture. Drabek (2012, 11-16) discusses the important roles that stories have played and continue to play in Alutiiq culture. Stories have "been revered" in a religious-like fashion, served as links between the physical and spiritual worlds, and are embodied in Alutiiq material culture (Drabek 2012, 11-13). Drabek (2012) argues the centrality of Alutiiq stories to reclaim and validate culture, correct history, identify and unite, heal, educate, and perpetuate Alutiiq survival.

The importance of stories in Native communities is furthered by Writer's (2008, 10) reflection: "As we tell our stories and speak our words, we heal ourselves and reclaim our humanity and knowledge about the world around us." Stories are a way to be heard and understood. Through stories knowledge about the world around us can be reclaimed and defined by those who experience it.

Lastly, “theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change” (Brayboy 2006, 430). Through adhering to the theoretical underpinnings of TribalCrit, research itself has the potential to foster social change, or be transformative. Transformation comes through challenging the status quo and common misconceptions by creating usable knowledge for those participating in the research (Rangel 2012, 39). Challenging and critically examining the status quo and from where it is derived brings dominant culture, and power into question and creates opportunity for social change by empowering localized traditional knowledge and stories (Daniels 2011, 216). In this way, using TribalCrit as a basis for research creates paths toward opportunities for social change.

4.1.2 Constructivist Grounded Theory

According to Charmaz (2000): “Constructivism assumes the relativism of multiple realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims toward interpretive understanding of subjects’ meanings” (250). Charmaz’s (2000, 250) definition of constructivist grounded theory (CGT) recognizes that knowledge and truth are not absolute. Instead knowledge and truth are social constructs framed within unique historical narratives. Different interpretations of reality are “true” within each of these historical narratives. CGT theory therefore necessitates critical, analytical interpretations of data that contextualize knowledge within a specific history, culture, and society. Both the viewer and the viewed find new knowledge or

create truth by contextualizing the experiences of both viewer and viewed within their specific historical narratives.

Viewer and viewed mutually develop knowledge through relationships between the researcher and research participants (Bensimon, et al. 2004; Wilson 2000), which creates opportunities for respondents to put narratives and experiences into their own terms (Charmaz 2000, 275). Building upon respondent narratives incorporates their own interpretations of the research and resulting data (Charmaz 2000, 70). This is accomplished through relationships between the researcher and research participants that encourage participants to share information and connect ideas (Wilson 2008, 133).

Creating opportunities for participants to share information and connect ideas requires researchers to return to the field to collaborate with participants. This sharing is referred to as “theoretical sampling” (Charmaz 2000, 266). Theoretical sampling upholds community involvement and consistent channels of communication (Bensimon, et al. 2004, 123). Theoretical sampling periods are opportunities to co-create truth and knowledge by contextualizing the experiences of both the viewer and viewed within specific perspectives, constructs, and histories of the research.

4.1.3 Action Research

Herr and Anderson (2005) define action research as a spiral of cycles that continually feed into each other. The first step in an action research project is to develop a plan to build upon an activity that is already happening (in this case, Language Club). Many times this plan comes from within a community setting to improve on something

that stakeholders see as needing improvement. Second, one must act to implement the plan. Third, one must observe the effects of action in the context in which it occurs. Finally, one must reflect on these effects as a basis for further planning and subsequent action. At this point, the cycle will theoretically repeat itself, starting back at developing a new plan to improve on what is already happening.

Action research (AR) can be implemented in differing ways. Three types of AR are: technical, practical, and emancipatory (Tripp 1990, 160; Herr and Anderson 2005, 27-28). Technical AR aims at explaining a phenomenon through empirical evidence and generalizations through distanced observations to create results focused on instrumental change. For example, if technical AR was being implemented for this research, I would observe Language Club at a distance to formulate recommendations on how to instrumentally change the structure of Language Club, i.e. by changing the weekly agenda, the structure of language activities, or designating participants to play key roles at Language Club.

Practical AR seeks to illuminate participant understandings and awareness of a research situation before further action occurs (Herr and Anderson 2005, 27). A practical AR approach to this research would aim at illuminating participant understandings of Language Club goals. Illuminating participant goals would be accomplished by planning how to act, acting on that plan, making observations on the action, and finally reflecting.

Emancipatory AR orients research to critically examine relations of power (socially, historically, culturally). The goal of emancipatory AR is to mobilize participants toward opportunities of maximum potential. Maximum potential here

references the action, or process of mobilization towards emancipatory outcomes. Findings from this research have rekindled discussions among Language Club participants about the implications of language revitalization and the role the movement has in both their own lives and the broader community. However, it is worth noting that these discussions do not originate from the data collection process of this research, nor from the findings of this research. Instead the findings from this research have functioned as a catalyst to move the discussions in new and expanding ways. In this way, emancipatory AR here represents the process of healing (see Chapter 5 and Chapter 6) and re-engaging in discussions with different insight and perspective.

In order to best meet the specific aims of this research, a hybrid of practical and emancipatory AR was executed. A discussion about the ways both practical and emancipatory AR were used in this research will be outlined in both chapters five and six. In chapter five I attempt to provide a general understanding of Language Club learner goals and objectives (aligning with practical AR). These goals and objectives are then framed within specific social, historical, and cultural contexts in chapter six to help realize maximum attainment of participant goals (aligning with emancipatory AR).

4.2 How TribalCrit, CGT, and AR Work Together

Each step of the action research process comes in contact with the theoretical underpinnings of TribalCrit and CGT. As we know, TribalCrit recognizes the endemic nature of colonization in society, and examines concepts of culture, knowledge, and power through an Indigenous lens. TribalCrit also recognizes the legitimacy of stories as

data and theory, and the connectedness of theory and practice. Understanding the central tenets of TribalCrit sheds light on how practical and emancipatory AR can uphold the theoretical underpinnings of TribalCrit. Together practical and emancipatory AR research have the potential both to foster basic understanding of a phenomenon and mobilize participants toward realizing maximum potential within the research contexts.

Similarly, CGT focuses on the relativity of multiple realities, mutually creating knowledge, and interpreting participants' meanings through a cyclical process congruent with that observed in AR. For example, the process of theoretical sampling (as discussed above in section 4.1.2 Constructivist Grounded Theory) is itself cyclical and requires community involvement, open channels of communication, and the co-creation of knowledge to create a locally relevant outcome. Figure 4, depicts how TribalCrit, CGT, and AR work together for this research, where the interaction of moving parts represents the ways both TribalCrit and constructivist grounded theory drive the cyclical process of plan, act, observe, and reflect.

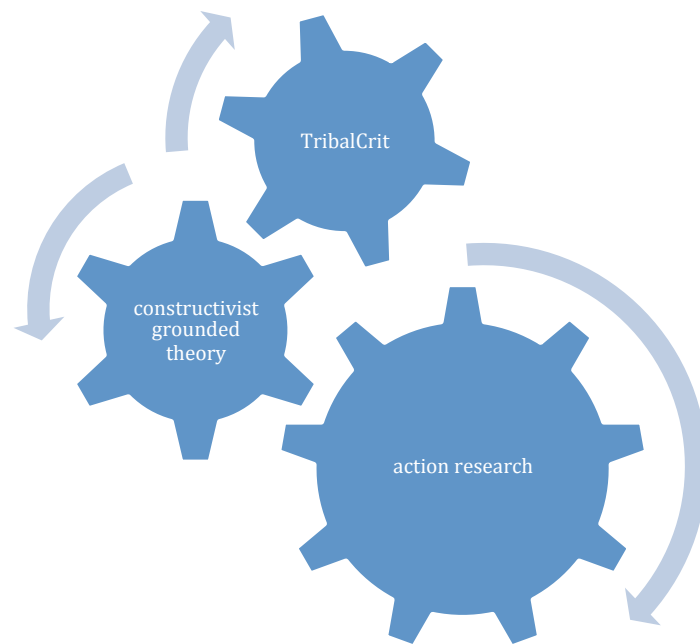


Figure 4: Theories and Method

4.3 Indigenous Research Paradigm

The ways TribalCrit, CGT, and AR work together facilitates what Wilson (2008) defines as an “Indigenous research paradigm.” An “Indigenous research paradigm” aims at understanding how research has been conducted on Indigenous peoples in the past to exploit and oppress, and it focuses research on Indigenous concerns and worldviews (Wilson 2008; Lomawaima 2000, 3; Smith 1999).

According to Smith, much of past research on Indigenous peoples has been “outsider” oriented, where the aim of research was to observe without being “implicated in the scene” (Smith 1999, 137). This type of research aimed to be “objective” and “neutral” and often entailed researchers coming into communities to collect data, to then leave the research site to analyze data without the input of those being researched. This

put interpretation of data into the hands of the researcher alone. Research of this nature oftentimes results in conclusions that do not necessarily align with the experiences, worldviews, or needs of the community being researched.

An Indigenous research paradigm attempts to create research opportunities where both researcher and research participants understand research from their own perspectives and for their own purposes (Smith 1999). An Indigenous research paradigm therefore aims at generating products that are user-friendly and focused on community priorities. Generating user-friendly products through research is largely in opposition to much of past research on Indigenous peoples that aimed at verifying previous theory through “objective” or “neutral” research (Bensimon, et al. 2004; Charmaz 2000, 255). Upholding an Indigenous research paradigm aligns with the theoretical underpinnings of TribalCrit, CGT, and AR (Wilson 2008, 39; Smith 1999; Counciller 2010), because an Indigenous research paradigm aims at creating products that are user-friendly by considering Indigenous rights and histories as observed through the implications of colonization (as outlined by TribalCrit). Similarly, an Indigenous research paradigm aligns with CGT by acknowledging that knowledge and truth are not absolute, but mutually created between the researcher and research participants. And both TribalCrit and CGT propel the ways AR is implemented in this research by first providing a general understanding of Language Club participant goals and objectives, while simultaneously seeking to understand how those goals are interpreted within a specific social, historical, and cultural context (per a hybrid practical and emancipatory AR methodology). I therefore

argue that through using TribalCrit, CGT, and this implementation of AR, this research aligns with an Indigenous research paradigm.

4.4 Insider v. Outsider

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, I am not originally from Kodiak, nor am I Alutiiq or Alaska Native. In this research I am an outsider, because I am not Native, not Alutiiq, and was not born or raised in Kodiak. “Outsiders”, like myself, conducting research with Indigenous communities need to be looked at critically because in the past “outsider” researchers have hurt Native communities through physical, spiritual, or representational harm. To better understand the ways my outsider status impacts this research I will borrow from Smith (1999, 176), who articulates a clear description of the delicate positionality and power researchers possess:

Research in itself is a powerful intervention, even if carried out at a distance, which has traditionally benefited the researcher, and the knowledge base of the dominant group in society. When undertaking research, either across cultures or within a minority culture, it is critical that researchers recognize the power dynamic which is embedded in the relationship with their subjects. Researchers are in receipt of privileged information. They may interpret it within an overt theoretical framework, but also in terms of a covert ideological framework. They have the power to distort, to make invisible, to overlook, to exaggerate and to draw conclusions, based not on factual data, but on assumptions, hidden value

judgments, and often downright misunderstandings. They have the potential to extend knowledge or to perpetuate ignorance (Smith 1999, 176).

Through this statement Smith (1999, 176), asks the researcher four important questions:

1. How does this research benefit the researcher and the knowledge base of the dominant group in society?
2. How does the researcher recognize power dynamics embedded in relationships with participants?
3. How is data interpreted within an overt theoretical framework?
4. What covert theoretical framework is being used to interpret data?

Smith's questions also align with the guidelines for research outlined by the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) (Alaska Native Knowledge Network), and can therefore be viewed as locally valid questions for researchers working in Alaska specifically.

First, Smith (1999, 176) asks how I benefit from this research. This research benefits me in two different ways, because I am involved with the Alutiiq language both through my studies and my professional work. Regarding my current studies, this research forms the foundation of my Master's thesis work, offering me access to higher paying jobs and greater qualifications through completion of higher education. Regarding my current employment, I am currently contracted through the Native Village of Afognak (NVA) in Kodiak, Alaska as an Alutiiq language multi-media coordinator. The contract supports multi-media development for NVA's Alutiiq language program. This research will also give me further qualifications, opening opportunities to pursue employment

requiring greater Alutiiq competency and educational attainment. My professional advancement is problematic because an Alutiiq individual by definition would be uniquely qualified to work in language revitalization in ways that I am not. An Alutiiq individual would be more qualified because s/he would be working with *his/her* heritage language, within *his/her* community and culture; I cannot claim such qualifications. Similarly, both academically and professionally, completion of a Master's thesis in Alutiiq language policy and planning opens doors to opportunities to continue on to a Ph.D. program which would create further access to greater opportunities, prestige, and pay.

Second, Smith (1999, 176) asks how I recognize power dynamics embedded in relationships with research participants. Simply by virtue of overseeing the research as part of my Master's thesis work, I am in a position of power. I formulated the research questions and conclusions. Therefore, I cannot help but portray Language Club through my own lens. This means I run the risk of portraying Language Club through a lens counter to an Indigenous research paradigm (Smith 1999). To avoid this, I must align my lens with that of my research participants. To accomplish this, I have tried to formalize roles of research participants, community committee members, and academic committee members. I have also tried to build checks and balances into my research methodology.

When non-Indigenous researchers participate in research, their roles must remain in constant check, and Indigenous people must be involved in "key and often senior roles" (Smith 1999, 178). An example of the "key and ... senior roles" (Smith 1999, 17)

that form a critical aspect of the checks and balances in this research can be exemplified through both my academic committee and community committee.

My academic committee is comprised of Patrick Marlow, Ph.D., Chanda Meek, Ph.D., both from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and April Laktonen Counciller, Ph.D. from Kodiak College (an extension of University of Alaska Anchorage). This committee has helped me throughout my graduate school experience. I have learned from them through their classes and independent studies as part of my coursework. They have walked me through the research process, helped me write proposals, and edit papers. They have also supported and pushed me to grow academically and personally. Dr. Marlow, who serves as the committee chair, has also worked with me one-on-one throughout the analysis process of this research. My academic committee as a whole has created a structure of academic accountability through their involvement, the important roles they play as academic mentors, and as role models.

My community committee (discussed in greater depth in section 4.5.4 Data Collection) in many ways functions as an extension of my academic committee. However, my community committee has offered critique, encouragement, and support at different times throughout my schooling. As respected Alutiiq community members, they have also offered unparalleled community insight and support. This committee was comprised of April Laktonen Counciller, Ph.D. from Kodiak College (who has also served on my academic committee), Alisha S. Drabek, Ph.D., Director of the Alutiiq Museum and Archeological Repository, and Kari Sherod, at the Native Village of Afognak. These individuals have continually supported my efforts and questioned my

work in ways that have helped me grow as a researcher and an individual. All three have supported me in diverse and indescribable ways that have grounded me, kept me in check, and motivated me to continue in responsible, appropriate ways.

Even though there are built in checks and balances through the support of both my community committee and academic committee, the mistakes presented throughout this thesis are my own. Although I am indebted to their support, critique, and insight, the interpretations are my own. Any misinterpretation, mistake, confusion, or incomplete narrative is my own fault, and not that of the community committee or academic community.

Despite the fact that power dynamics are inevitable, there are ways to balance these power dynamics through the formal roles my academic and community committees play. These committees form the foundation of formal relationships of accountability, and formal checks and balances. As stated, as the researcher I have the power to define the research questions and cannot help but frame the conclusions through my own lens. It is my hope that by being particularly aware of, and using, the checks and balances I have put in place that I have been able to align my lens with that of my research participants.

Third, Smith (1999, 176) asks how my overt theoretical framework mitigates against my acting in my own best interest and misusing my power as a researcher. Using an Indigenous research paradigm as an overt theoretical framework helps guide me towards understanding the legacy of past research on Indigenous peoples and helps me aim at focusing research on Indigenous concerns (Wilson 2008; Lomawaima 2000, 3; Smith 1999). Ensuring this research focuses on Indigenous concerns and worldviews is

accomplished through the cyclical process of action research (AR) (section 4.1.3), the theoretical sampling as dictated through constructivist grounded theory (CGT) (section 4.1.2), and understanding the centrality of colonization per TribalCrit (section 4.1.1). Having TribalCrit and CGT come in contact with the cyclical process of AR helps facilitate acting not in my own personal best interest. Instead, it obligates me as the researcher to keep participants informed and involved throughout the research process. Participant involvement from beginning to end is accomplished through open communication and transparency. Open communication and transparency is a product of relationships, which are critical to research validity (Whitt 1998). Relationships open opportunities for research to impact the community in a localized context (Bensimon, et al. 2004). Relationships “of integrity and intent” render a researcher qualified to make valid observations (Whitt 1998,142). Similarly, since participants and I interact socially, professionally, and academically outside of Language Club activities or objectives, there are other built-in social, professional, and academic checks and balances ensuring participants are informed and involved throughout the process.

Finally, Smith (1999, 176) questions what covert ideological framework might a researcher like myself be perpetuating. As an outsider I have a greater potential to misinterpret information, discussions, interactions, etc. based on social, cultural, and historical paradigms that exist outside the contexts of this research. Misinterpretations of this nature may skew data to paint a picture that is untrue, unfit, and misrepresentative of Language Club, and the broader Alutiiq language movement. Smith (1999) tells us “insiders” are best suited to conduct research in Indigenous contexts, because an

“insider” would already be familiar with historical, social, and cultural contexts critical to the research. Realizing the implications of my outsider status underscores the importance and centrality of my methodology to the integrity of this research. Focusing on the ways the theoretical underpinnings of TribalCrit and CGT come in contact with the cyclical attributes of AR will mitigate against a researcher’s covert ideological framework.

4.5 Methods

Before diving into a discussion on the methods employed to conduct this research, we should first revisit the research questions.

4.5.1 Research Questions

- What are Language Club participants’ spoken and unspoken goals? And how do they define their goals?
- What product, or end result do participants seek through their participation in the Language Club?
- How do goals match or mismatch with available activities and resources in language revitalization? For example: Does Language Club itself help participants reach their goals? Do available activities outside Language Club better meet their needs? And if so, what are they and how do they use them?

As necessitated through the discussion about TribalCrit, CGT and AR, these questions require both the researcher and research participants to collaborate in creating

results. The research needs to ensure participants' voices are heard, and that their questions and concerns are addressed. In the introduction to this thesis, I explained how these research questions originated from within the community itself. The questions originated from asking about ways to improve learning and involvement. However, if we want to understand ways to improve, we first need to understand what participants want. Identifying participant goals and objectives, and how they are reaching those goals helps determine what needs improving.

The interview script was directly derived from the three research questions, and led to five discussion topics. The five discussion topics are referenced in table 1 below (to see the full interview script, please see appendix 1).

Table 2: Language Club Participant Interview Topics

Topics:	Selected Example Questions:
<i>Personal history/involvement with the Alutiiq language, or Alutiiq Language Club</i>	Where are you from originally? What was it like the first time you walked into Language Club? Can you tell me about how you became involved with the Language Club? When did you first hear about Language Club? Did anyone in particular get you involved?
<i>What are the spoken and unspoken goals of participants?</i>	How is Language Club important to you? How long have you participated in the Alutiiq Language Club? Why do you continue to participate in Language Club? Would you recommend coming to Language Club to others? Besides learning Alutiiq, what else do you get out of Language Club?
<i>What product do participants seek through participating in the Language Club?</i>	What are you hoping to get out of Language Club? What do you want to see as a result of your participation in Language Club? Is Language Club beneficial to you? In what ways?
<i>What are Language Club participant goals? And how do they define their goals?</i>	Does Language Club help you reach your language goals? What do you do outside Language Club to learn Alutiiq? Where do you use the things you have learned in Language Club?
<i>Other loose ends</i>	Is there anything else you would like to tell me? Is there something that we did not get to talk about that you would like to bring up at this time? Do you have any questions for me?

The first discussion topic addresses a personal history and involvement with the Alutiiq language and the Alutiiq Language Club. The second focuses on participation in Language Club, and participant spoken and unspoken goals. The third discussion focuses on specific outcomes participants seek through their participation in Language Club. The

fourth discussion point focuses on how participants have come to define their goals. The final discussion point aims to invite thoughts on any topics that were not discussed in the interview that the participant would like to review before completing the dialogue. Each of these items has a small sampling of questions (a sampling of these questions is in the right hand column in table 2) that would fall within the scope of each of the five topics. The list of sample questions under each topic helped me focus the discussion and helped me ensure I was able to ask questions that were relevant to the topic while maintaining the flow of the broader discussion.

4.5.2 Research Site

The Alutiiq Language Club is an informal group that meets weekly to focus on speaking and learning Alutiiq as a group. Meetings are every Wednesday at the Sun'aq Tribal office conference room in downtown Kodiak, Alaska. The conference room has a large conference table that everyone sits around. If more people are in attendance than there are spots at the conference table, more chairs are squeezed around the table. Gatherings last from noon until one o'clock. Participation is voluntary and attendance varies. Some weeks there are 25 people in attendance; other weeks there may only be two or three people in attendance. There is no explicit agenda at Language Club, so members bring topics to talk about, games to play, lessons to practice, or at times, nothing at all. It is open, unstructured, and casual. There is always coffee available (provided by the Sun'aq tribe), and sometimes a participant brings cookies, or other treats. Language Club began in 2003 as an opportunity for language masters and apprentices funded through the

Alutiiq Museum to gather once a week to discuss language learning, to catch up, or to learn Alutiiq as a larger group. The terms “masters” and “apprentices” here references the Alutiiq Museum’s language to define the learners (apprentices) and Elders (masters) participating in focused language learning through the Master-Apprentice Project. Generally speaking, Language Club is a laid-back gathering where participants can expect to find Alutiiq language, hot coffee, and a few people speaking Alutiiq.

4.5.3 Participants

A total of eight individuals participated in this research. The ages of participants ranged from early-twenties to early sixties. Both males and females were interviewed, however a majority of interviewees was female (1 male, 7 females). Looking at the makeup of Language Club during the research period indicates a possible under-representation of males in this research. During the research period 18 different females attended Language Club (4 Elders, 14 learners), and 10 different males attended Language Club (2 Elders, 8 learners, including myself). However, when referencing my research journal where I kept notes regarding attendance, males did not attend as often as females. The lack of consistent male attendance limited opportunities to approach males with the option to participate in the research. Similarly, the total numbers of unique individuals who attended Language Club during the research period may lead the reader to believe that there were habitually 15-20 individuals at Language Club. This was normally not the case. On average, there were five to eight individuals attending Language Club. These numbers change based on who was in town (visiting Elders or

learners from outside Kodiak City), or other conflicts and engagements that limited habitual attendance. Similarly only eight were interviewed because I was attempting to target language learners (not Elders), automatically eliminating a total of six potential participants. Of the remaining 22 learners, only 8 agreed to be interviewed. I did not approach every learner, but approached approximately 11 participants. Three declined because they were either not interested or felt their involvement and presence in Language Club was not sufficient to participate. Others were not approached because I was unable to catch them after Language Club, I did not have their contact information, or they attended infrequently.

Educational attainment ranged from high school graduates to Ph.D. All participants were living in Kodiak, Alaska at the time of data collection. Some participants had been attending Language Club regularly since its beginnings in 2003, while at the opposite end of the spectrum, one participant had been attending Language Club for only a few weeks when data collection started in September 2012. Prior to data collection I was acquainted with all participants. I knew them from being a member of Language Club, from work, or from sharing similar social circles.

A sketch of who participated in this research is rather short due to the nature of living in a rural town on an island. If even minor information were divulged, it would be easy to determine who said what. My goal is to protect participant identity as much as possible. Similarly, I assured participants that if they requested to have confidentiality maintained, I would strive to ensure that pact was kept. Any intentional identifying markers are only possible because of participant permission.

4.5.4 Data Collection

The research questions were formed over the course of approximately two years as a result of participation and collaboration with Language Club participants. Prior to conducting the research, I had been a member of Language Club since 2009. The specific research questions were put in their final format during my time at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, but the questions were rooted in discussions and observations I had experienced through Language Club. Although many individuals in Language Club have supported me throughout each step of the process, there were three individuals in particular who helped me formulate the questions. These were April Laktonen Counciller, Ph.D., Alisha Drabek, Ph.D., and Kari Sherod. I will refer to these three individuals as my “community committee.” These individuals always made themselves available either by phone, e-mail, or in person. Each of them continues to support and mentor me as I have grown throughout this process. I am fortunate to have had Dr. Counciller serve on my academic committee throughout this research and continue to mentor me academically. Dr. Drabek also continues to mentor me in immeasurable ways. Ms. Sherod, language coordinator for Native Village of Afognak’s (NVA) language program, is both a friend and work supervisor. Ms. Sherod was my supervisor at work during the data collection period when I was contracted to work on an oral history project for NVA’s library, and continues to supervise me in my current position at NVA as the Alutiiq language multi-media coordinator. These individuals guided me with their passion for the Alutiiq language, and their intimate knowledge of the broader language

movement and community. Each offered me a different set of perspectives and background. Dr. Counciller was a founding member of Language Club in her past position at the Alutiiq Museum, and has been involved in many ways throughout the language movement. She is now faculty at Kodiak College in the Alutiiq Studies Program. Dr. Drabek has been an independent contractor working on materials development for various organizations and independently teaching Alutiiq language at the high school. Dr. Drabek is currently the executive director of the Alutiiq Museum. Ms. Sherod has been passionate about Alutiiq language and culture and has been working for NVA as the language program coordinator for a little over two years. Both Dr. Counciller and Dr. Drabek participated formally in this research, however Ms. Sherod elected not to participate. Similarly, Ms. Sherod does not habitually participate in Language Club, so would not have fallen within the defined research community.

While I was formulating the research questions, I would meet with these individuals separately and talk about how Language Club and the language movement were developing. These topics always led to a discussion about the “next steps.” Topics about improving learning and involvement continually arose. Similarly, new language programs were beginning in the community and together we hypothesized about how the new programs might change Language Club. Discussions about making improvements and new programs brought about a recognition that we could not easily continue to progress and grow without knowing what participants wanted from Language Club. It is important to note that the research questions were not discussed with every Language Club member, but were derived from discussions primarily between myself and the

“community committee.” Not all members of Language Club were involved in the formation of this research.

My academic committee was also critical in formulating this research. For example, my academic committee helped me narrow the research cohort, which was important since Language Club is a very casual organization. Of course there are those who are in attendance every week, and others who come less frequently. Because of the casual nature of Language Club, members are defined simply as those who have attended Language Club. However, the majority of participants in this research attend Language Club regularly.

After the questions and cohort were clearly defined, I drafted a proposal with the help of my academic committee to submit to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. The IRB is the University of Alaska Fairbanks’ research review board. The IRB reviews research proposals and looks into questions of ethics, participant vulnerability, etc. Once I got approval from the IRB to begin research, I was ready to collect data. Data collection began in September 2012 and continued through March 2013. During the research period, I interviewed a total of eight participants. Participating in the research was made available to all language learners who expressed interest. I approached 11 participants. Three declined because they were either not interested or felt their involvement and presence in Kodiak city was not sufficient to participate. Others were not approached because I was unable to catch them after Language Club, did not have their contact information, or they attended infrequently.

The option to participate in the research was raised at or after Language Club meetings when people were mingling and chatting. When discussing the research with potential participants, I outlined (1) research goals and objectives, which included collecting data about Language Club participant goals and objectives through interviews to be used for writing a Masters thesis, with the possibility of its being used for other publication or presentations; (2) what participation in the research would entail, including an interview that might last upwards of 45 minutes, a post-data discussion and their continued feedback and input in a manner that felt appropriate to them, and; (3) that participation was voluntary and they would receive no monetary compensation for their participation. Potential participants were also informed that there would be no other direct benefit to them as a result of participation. The first encounter with each potential participant was unscripted and conversational. More detailed information was shared with those who decided they would consider participating in the research. After discussing the specific research questions and objectives, Language Club participants were encouraged to ask questions and offer feedback. Critiques and further discussions were encouraged throughout the research period: however I did not receive any critiques regarding research objectives.

Following initial contact with potential participants, a time was established to meet. The meeting reviewed:

1. goals and possible use of the research,
2. issues of confidentiality,
3. the potential for continued input, and

4. discussion topics (table 2) to be used in the open-ended interview process.

Note here again how the focal points are directly derived from the underlying research questions (see appendix 1 for complete interview format).

A total of eight people were interviewed. Each of the eight interviews was transcribed for use in the data set. The longest interview was 51 minutes, and the shortest interview lasted 21 minutes. Participants chose the location for the interview, making the process as convenient and comfortable as possible for them. I met with four interviewees in my office at Native Village of Afognak's library in downtown Kodiak, where I was able to close the door and offer a private space where we could discuss the open-ended interview topics. I also conducted interviews at one participant's home, two participants' offices, and my home in the case of one participant.

Before each interview began, each participant agreed to being recorded for transcription. An informed consent waiver was reviewed and signed before the recording began. On the consent form the following information was listed: how the research was going to be used, what participants rights entailed, follow-up procedures for both participant and researcher, researcher obligations, and contact information in case of misuse or a violation of participant rights (see appendix 2 for consent form).

The open-ended interviews started with a standard introduction of how the interview was going to be structured , at which point I again explained and showed participants the interview script with the five discussion topics that I wanted to discuss in each interview. We talked about each point for as much or as little time as they wished. Each of the five topics had a sampling of questions that could be asked to help start

conversation (see appendix 1 for complete list of sample questions and open-interview script). The interviews were designed to be casual conversations in which we touched on each topic to varying degrees.

I followed each interview with an e-mail containing a typed transcript of the recorded open-ended discussion. I encouraged participants to make edits to ensure the written portion represented their views and perspectives appropriately. When participants had reviewed their transcriptions, they returned the edited versions to me for coding. I retained a copy of the original transcript until I received the edited version from participants, at which point I deleted the original and replaced it with the copy from the participant. I did not compare the original transcripts to the ones I had received from participants; therefore I do not know the extent to which participants edited or did not edit their transcripts.

Once all transcriptions had been returned, I began analytical coding using free text analysis software. The software used for this research was TAMSAalyzer version 4.43b1ahL (4.43b1ahs-lion). I decided to use TAMSAalyzer software to help with coding despite criticisms that claim software tends to invite analysts to “skim the surface of even the richest” data (Lee and Esterhuizen 2000, 235), and that using software reduces qualitative research to “mimic survey research” (Lee and Esterhuizen 2000, 236). Despite the critiques that using software enables researchers to skim over rich data, or mimic survey research, using software as a tool offers researchers benefits (Bringer, Johnston, and Brackenridge 2006). The computer does not do the analysis (Ibid., 248). Instead researchers still must seek out emergent themes and find ways the themes interact

with one another. Software makes emergent themes easier to manage, merge, and keep organized. Similarly, Lee and Esterhuizen (2000, 251) note that managing data using software enables the researcher to focus on the views of participants, leading to relevant theory development. Good analytical software also enables researchers to revisit coded texts more easily to be considered within emergent themes and analysis. Analysis software also helps merge codes that were thought to be different but where in fact the same (Ibid., 255). Software helps researchers gain distance from data when necessary, but quickly zoom in when needed (Lee and Esterhuizen 2000, 257). Using TAMSAalyzer was therefore elected to assist in the research process.

Within this software, I defined codes based on themes that emerged through the edited transcripts and through observations made in my own personal research journal. The research journal is a document reflecting my observations and events at and around Language Club. The final code set derived from the data is listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Final Code Set

Empowerment	Healing	Methods
Goals	Ownership	Background
Community	Conflict	Fear
Frequency	Fun	History
Lacking	Realization	Return
Revitalization	Special	Reading / Writing

I created codes when a topic was discussed in the transcripts. The final code set comprised of: empowerment, healing, methods, goals, ownership, background, community, conflict, fear, frequency, fun, history, lacking realization, return, revitalization, special, reading / writing. These codes were used to identify sections of the discussions that addressed each topic or code. The majority of the codes in the final code set were original, however, if codes began to become too specific and could be covered under a more general theme, they were merged. For example, the code “fun” was originally four separate codes, including “games”, “humor”, “jokes”, and “fun.” These separate codes were merged under “fun” this helped reveal broader themes by moving away from redundant specificity. New codes were also added to the list of pre-existing codes if a new specific topic arose, for example “fear” was added later, but it only arose twice. The most frequently occurring codes: community, return, conflict, and empowerment were all original codes defined while coding transcripts and were identified as the top ranking topics. Even though community, return, conflict, and empowerment are the top codes, other themes emerge from these codes. The primary theme that emerged from the coded items is “community” with subthemes “family”, “tradition and culture” and “healing.” The themes will be discussed in chapter five.

Once all transcripts had been coded, data was compiled to help foster further discussion. Using TAMSAalyzer, I was able to sort data and extract a few items of importance: (1) how many times a specific code appeared across all interview transcripts, (2) who talked about specific topics, and how many times they talked about said topic, and (3) what participants said under specific codes. Using this data, I created a one-page

handout to facilitate conversation with talking points derived from the data of all participants (appendix 3). This handout did not contain any names or identifying information, or specific coded texts. I then met with participants for a discussion based on preliminary findings; these discussions will be referred to as “post-data discussions.” I met with a total of seven participants for post-data discussions. I was able to meet with four participants through one-on-one discussions. I met with three other participants in a small group on a Saturday afternoon at one participant’s house. The three participants I met with were not the same three individuals (“community committee”) I collaborated with to formulate my questions; however, Dr. Drabek was one of the participants at the small group discussion. This meeting was prompted by one participant in particular who noted the benefits of talking about the data as a small group. All participants were invited, and encouraged to come; however, only three were able to attend the small group post-data discussion. One participant and I did not formally meet for a post-data discussion due to scheduling conflicts; however, casual conversations about research implications, topics, and review continued between us.

The one-page handout was used as a tool to focus the discussions (see figure 5 for modified version of handout, full handout appears as appendix 3). Through the handout, each participant was able to see what topics they discussed, how often they discussed a topic, and what everyone else had talked about expressed through frequency of coded items. As illustrated in figure 5, each code is listed to the left, with participant numbers listed above. When I met with participants, I told each of them their participant number (P1 means participant 1 for example) and we discussed code frequency and what it meant

to them. With the small group, they all felt comfortable that they knew one another's participant numbers. After I told them which code sets belonged to them we also talked about what the codes and related numbers meant to them. The small group talked about the differences they had in code frequency. We talked about the codes as abstract items to further the discussion about what the codes meant to them. That is, we examined the codes and discussed what they meant to participants decontextualized from the quotations and conversations from which they emerged. Each discussion started with my describing the handout and then turning the discussion over to the research participant or participants. I wanted their feedback to dominate the discussion, not mine. It was beneficial to discuss the themes as abstract items to see if similar ideas, opinions, concepts, and experiences emerged from talking about the codes themselves. Luckily the codes were validated in this way.

From the discussions with participants, the top four codes, community, return, conflict, and empowerment (highlighted in the right column in Figure 5) were discussed as broader themes. The option to discuss "methods" was also raised, considering it had the same number of coded items as "empowerment", however the discussion about methods was quickly exhausted.

Participants validated that the top four codes seemed appropriate. However, there were participants who did not have community, return, conflict, or empowerment as a top coded item, and some participants asked about why the code set appeared to be skewed for specific participants. In the example of participant 6 who had topics coded as "history" top the chart, I described how the discussion with that specific individual

focused on the history of Language Club, where it had been, who was in it, and what had been done throughout their years of participation in Language Club. This clarification seemed to satisfy participant 6. From these post-data discussions themes were narrowed and re-discussed in a way that corroborated what the numbers were already pointing towards: the importance of community. In figure 5 we can see the top coded topics at the top of the list. The code titles are in the far left column. Across the top of the table are participant numbers (participant 1 for example is labeled P1 on the table, participant 2 is P2, and so forth). Under each participant header is a list of numbers that corresponds to the number of times a coded topic appeared in his or her transcript (for example participant 1 talked about community 9 times, return 5 times, conflict 2 times, and so forth). Moving to the far right hand side of the table the reader can see the top four codes highlighted. The number in this column corresponds to the total number of times that coded item appeared in all participant transcripts. Also noticeable in the table are the highlighted numbers scattered throughout the body. These highlighted numbers are the code most mentioned in that participant's interview, for example, Participants 1, 2, 4, and 5 talked about community the most, participant 3 talked about "empowerment" six times (the most discussed item for them) and so forth.

Codes occurring in individual interviews:

CODE	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	Total
community	9	9	3	18	8	5	3	4	59
return	5	7	1	8	3	5	1	4	34
conflict	2	6	1	8	4	7	0	5	33
empowerment	4	7	6	3	5	0	0	1	26
methods	2	4	3	0	7	2	4	4	26
special	5	3	4	4	4	2	1	2	25
realization	2	3	2	4	3	0	1	2	17
goals	3	3	1	0	3	2	2	2	16
history	0	0	0	0	0	10	1	5	16
background	1	6	0	2	2	3	0	1	15
revitalization	1	0	1	4	2	3	2	1	14
healing	1	4	0	0	1	0	3	3	12
ownership	3	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	9
fun	3	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	8
reading & writing	1	1	0	2	1	0	2	0	7
lacking	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	5
frequency	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	3
fear	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Total	44	54	25	57	48	41	21	37	327

Figure 5: Post-Data Discussion Handout

We also talked about what participants would change about the codes, or what they liked about the themes. Most participants agreed that they felt as though the codes were representative of their discussion. One participant however, was surprised that “goals” was not discussed more frequently.

Following the post-data discussions, many of the codes were largely discarded (like “fear” or “frequency”), while others were merged, or examined together. For example, “special” and “empowerment” were not merged, but examined as relating to one another when preparing to articulate emergent themes. However, participants largely supported initial findings. From the post-data discussions I was able to add further insight, perspective, and clarification. After all post-data discussions had taken place (aside from the single participant that I was unable to meet with for a post-data discussion) I then began working on a write-up of the data.

Once a rough draft was completed, it was disseminated to all participants for comment. The copy of the draft that was disseminated to participants contained highlighted quotations directly derived from their individual transcript, and post-data comments (if any). Most approved the way their statements were used. Some participants did correct grammar or word order in their quotations to make them less colloquial and more readable.

After participants' edits were integrated into the draft of a data write-up, I shared the draft with my committee. At the advice of my advisor, I integrated some themes in order to streamline the discussion, and to better understand how this data fit into the broader landscape of literature regarding Indigenous language revitalization. This altered the presentation of themes. The culmination of participant discussions and committee input will be discussed in the chapter 5: Data and Findings.

4.6 Conclusion

Through this chapter I have outlined the theoretical underpinnings of TribalCrit, CGT, and AR and their applicability to this research. I also briefly touched on an Indigenous research paradigm, and how TribalCrit, CGT, and AR reflect the underlying concept of an Indigenous research paradigm. I also outlined the specifics to how the research was conducted with a step-by-step discussion of each phase of the research. The next chapter will focus on the information that emerged from the data collection process.

5.0 Data and Findings

Language Club is a place to gain access to Alutiiq. Participants go “Cause I wanted to learn Alutiiq” (participant 5). Attending Language Club is “part of the process” (participant 4) of learning, however Language Club serves other purposes as well. Participant 4 continues to explain how Language Club “is not just [about] learning the language... but tradition and culture” as well. Although each participant noted how Language Club was a place for them to learn Alutiiq, learning Alutiiq was not a central theme in the data. Participant 2 describes how through participation she “hope(s) to achieve... fluency. But on a deeper level I would like to obtain Native thinking.” Native thinking begins to embody elements of broader themes that emerged through the data, like community, tradition, culture, and healing. Similarly, language learning as a theme was not central because participation in Language Club assumes that one is there to learn Alutiiq.

The themes presented below resulted from interviews, informal discussions, observations, and post-data discussions. The following quotations will create a narrative that highlights emergent themes from discussions with Language Club participants. The conversation will be broken down under an overarching theme of “community.” “Community” is categorized into three sub-titled sections: “family”, “tradition and culture”, and “healing.” “Community: family” was a theme that embodied the ways the Language Club community created a supporting, family-like network where Elders and learners have been able to learn about one another. This theme evidenced how participants find the family-like network to be an “emotional resource” (participant 4)

they can draw from to scaffold healing. The theme of “community: tradition and culture” highlighted the important role the Language Club community plays in learners accessing opportunities to be with Elders who embody Alutiiq culture and tradition. “Community: healing” represents how the Language Club community has fostered healing from the impacts of colonization where racism, and marginalization were linked to Alutiiq language and culture as Elders and learners mutually create space to share histories, traditions, culture, and language. Defining “healing” as a theme was a difficult process that I grappled with personally, and through discussions with participants. In many ways, the word “healing” itself has the connotation of recovering from being broken or wounded. The use of the word “healing”, however, does not try to subliminally articulate that participants are broken. Instead this theme attempts to articulate that healing attributes are present even when participants are not healing from a specific wound, or from being broken. During the thesis defense, the Chair from the Northern Studies Department, University of Alaska Fairbanks raised questions about the appropriateness of the term “healing” to articulate findings. In response to the question of appropriateness, I recognized the process of grappling with this term personally and with research participants. Community members, both Language Club community members, and community members who do not attend Language Club but are involved in the language movement, supported and appreciated the use of the term “healing” to articulate findings from this research. For example, an Elder shared how s/he was punished for speaking Alutiiq when s/he was younger. A community member who does not attend Language Club shared how his/her family hid the fact that they were Alutiiq, and language is a tool

to reclaim a once hidden identity. Through explicit support of the term, or through a shared story that articulated support, the appropriateness of the term “healing” was expressed. Table 4 functions as a summary of the sub-themes.

Table 4: Theme Definitions

<u>Community:</u>	
• Family:	Supporting family-like networks where Elders and learners are able to learn about one another, forming an emotional resources, which provides a basis for empowerment, visibility, growth, and ultimately healing
• Tradition & Culture:	Elders opening opportunities for access to culture and tradition
• Healing:	Healing through the Language Club community of Elders and learners from the impacts of colonization where racism, and marginalization were linked to Alutiiq language and culture. Healing derives from mutually created space to share histories, tradition, culture and language, all of which lead to points of pride / empowerment / healing

Although these sub-themes appear as distinct, stand-alone sub-themes, the reader will notice the interwoven nature of all these themes. Because of the interwoven nature and fluidity between themes, definitions are difficult to articulate. Even though the quotations are organized under themes and sub-themes, the reader will notice how many of the quotations carry an essence of other themes.

To illustrate the interconnected nature of the sub-themes, I will use a metaphor of a *maqiwik* (“banya” or “sauna”), just as Counciller (2010, 207-211) uses a metaphorical *Angyaq* (“open skin boat”) to illustrate findings in a culturally relevant fashion. The *maqiwik* metaphor will help communicate how each sub-theme interacts with the other sub-themes, and how they fit within the broader theme of community. Figure 6 is a rough illustration of a basic *maqiwik*. The *maqiwik* has been, and continues to be used as a social gathering place, as well as a place for healing, relaxing, and cleaning oneself. It is both a special and familiar place.

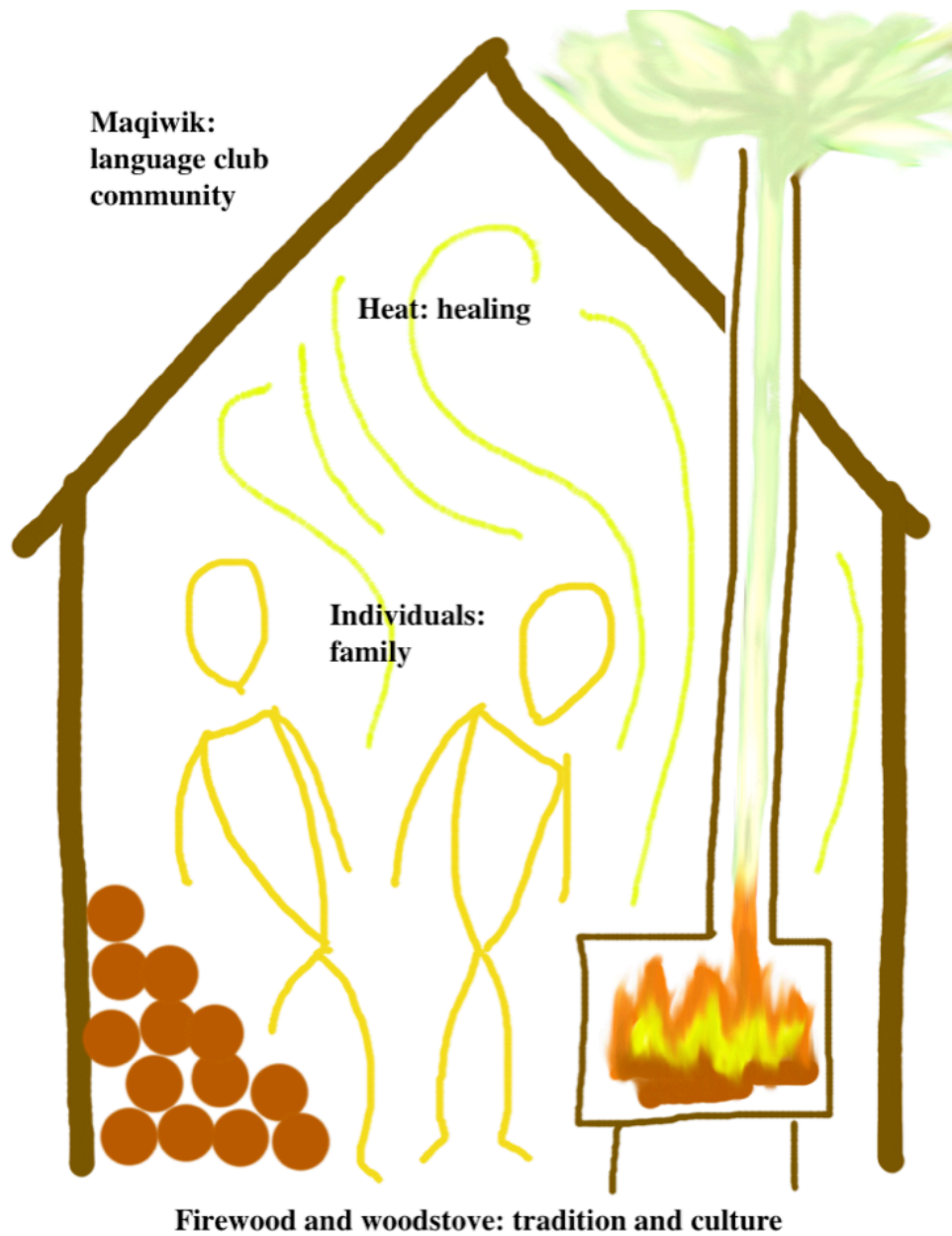


Figure 6: *Maqiwik*

The illustration of the *maqiwik* as a whole represents the boundedness of the Alutiiq Language Club community, although open to anyone willing to participate, the Language

Club community is much like the walls of a *maqiwik*, bounded and defined. Inside a modern *maqiwik*, one would find a woodstove, and dry firewood. Until a *maqiwik* is fired up, heated and ready to use, it is just another out building or shed-like structure. Once it is heated up, however it becomes a special place, a place of warmth and healing, for gathering and walking away cleansed, and refreshed. In the illustration, the firewood and woodstove represent tradition and culture, as an integrated whole. The people in the *maqiwik* represent the family-like attributes participants find at Language Club. The heat produced from the fire contained within the woodstove represents the healing attributes participants find through the Language Club community. Heat in a *maqiwik* contains healing properties for everyone within the *maqiwik*. In this way, the heat represents the theme of healing.

When the firewood is ignited within the woodstove (tradition and culture) they create heat (healing), which is experienced by those inside the *maqiwik*. The amount of heat produced is a byproduct of the quantity and quality of wood placed within the woodstove, the efficiency of the woodstove, and even the number of people present inside the *maqiwik*. When more individuals are present inside the *maqiwik*, they also generate their own heat. Heat is the one element in this metaphor that is not tangible; instead heat is atmospheric in nature and a product of each element working together. For example, when wood is fed into a woodstove and it is given time to burn and slowly heat up the space within the *maqiwik* is transformed into a place of healing and rejuvenation.

Each element of this metaphor has the potential to stand-alone and be identified individually, including heat, which can be experience outside the *maqiwik*. Wood can

burn outside a woodstove, individuals can gather in other places. Similarly, heat can be felt elsewhere, from the sun, a beach fire, or in a living room next to a woodstove. The heat inside a *maqiwik*, however is more concentrated and intense. Much like each element of the *maqiwik* metaphor is available elsewhere, participants are also able to access tradition and culture, and even healing outside the Language Club community. But similar to the *maqiwik*, which intensifies the heat produced from the woodstove and firewood, Language Club intensifies the community experience. The type of concentrated, intense heat found within a *maqiwik* is a direct by-product of the interactions between the burning firewood within the woodstove; the individuals found inside, and the boundedness of the *maqiwik*. Similarly, healing from colonization is a direct byproduct of the family-like attributes that grant participants access to tradition and culture, all of which are bounded within the Language Club community. In the following sections, the reader will see how each of these elements is interconnected. Keep in mind the atmospheric quality of “healing”, as represented in the *maqiwik* metaphor, because these atmospheric attributes of “healing” are present throughout each section. Even though the reader will stumble across elements of “healing” in each section, section 5.3 will explore more deeply the ways “healing” is experienced by participants.

5.1 Community: Family

The “community: family” theme embodies ways Language Club has created a community that supports its members in a family-like network where Elders and learners learn about one another. This section will show first how Language Club is seen as a

strong, family-like group. Second, how participants find Language Club as an emotional resource they are able to draw from. Third, the emotional resource provides a basis for empowerment, visibility, healing, and growth.

The community fostered through Language Club is seen as strong, family-like, and supporting, giving participants a sense of belonging within the group.

The group feels so cohesive, and we are all so ready to learn, and willing to learn and excited to have people who are at our peer level, I think that is what makes it really contagious, that you want to participate, and you want to find out all the different ways that you can, and it feels like a friends group, or a new family unit or something... it is all very... there is a lot of togetherness (participant 1).

As participant 1 explains above, participation is exciting, contagious, creates greater group cohesion, and fosters a family-like environment for learning. Accessing a family-like community through Language Club has become an objective all eight participants strive for. All eight participants discussed this theme, and topics surrounding this theme emerged 52 times throughout the data.

Language Club provides “that emotional resource” (participant 4) participants enjoy tapping into. As participant 4 explains, Language Club is not just about culture or language, but a place where people “have learned about each other and [keep] in contact with one another where before you didn’t know anyone.” Participant 8 sums up these ideas below when s/he explains that Language Club is a place where people “care about”

him/her.: “So I think that my attachment to the language movement is striving for that sense of family and that connection. And so, I do it because of that feeling that I get by feeling that I belong somewhere and that people care about me” (participant 8). The emotional resources, including belonging, were discussed by all eight participants a total of 29 times throughout the data collection period. For many participants learning from Elders’ experiences was important in fostering these important emotional bonds. Elders’ knowledge and experience is recognized by participant 2 as a knowledge base “that only they know, and no one else can have that... there is only one way to get it, and they have it.” Receiving knowledge and experiences from Elders “has given an opportunity for the relationships to happen” (participant 2). Elders’ sharing knowledge is in many ways foundational to the Language Club community structure.

The creation of community is also rooted in participant perceptions of Language Club functions. Participant 3 reflects how community creation “is part of the essence of these movements. They don’t necessarily need to be planned for, but they need to be fostered” (participant 3). For participant 3, community building happens naturally through language revitalization initiatives like Language Club; however community building needs to be supported for its continuance. The natural evolution of relationships that forms the basis of the Language Club community is seen by participant 2 as a result of Language Club itself. S/he reflects how the relationships could not exist “without this program.” The act of gathering, in and of itself creates space and time to nurture the Language Club community.

We have our relationships now. Those are my friends. And you know they are not good friends, we don't call and talk on the phone, they are not close friends. We see each other at Language Club, but it is a bond that has been created and it is a link between the generations that was seemingly lacking before. And it has given an opportunity to get to know people in a very different way that you wouldn't get to know them without this program (participant 2).

Participant 2 argues for supporting Language Club to make space for these relationships to grow, because without events like Language Club “you wouldn't get to know them” (participant 2). This point is further evidenced by participant 6 who has seen Language Club “go through those sorts of stresses”, including loss of funding, passing of Elders, internal strife regarding speaking styles, etc. Despite stresses experienced at Language Club, it “is still alive”, which shows “commitment to the language” and Language Club (participant 6). “You know I have been going to Language Club now for almost ten years, and to see it go through those sorts of stresses, but then you know we did come out of it and Language Club is still alive. And I think that shows a lot about people's commitment to the language” (participant 6). Working together to co-create a community of learners and speakers makes Language Club “feel like... some kind of extra curricular club” (participant 1). This extra curricular club creates what I would call a unique cohort within the broader community of Kodiak. The importance of this unique cohort was mentioned a total of 35 times in all eight interviews. Participant 2 discusses how “bonds... [have] been created” through participation in this group, these “bonds” directly

form “link[s] between generations that were seemingly lacking before.” These “links” and “bonds” are largely unavailable to most people elsewhere. Participant 2 reflects how Language Club has “given an opportunity to get to know people in a very different way.” Without Language Club, opportunities to form these ties would be largely unavailable for most. “You wouldn’t get to know [each other] without this program” (participant 2). Language Club has facilitated the formation of unique relationships and has built a group structure not found elsewhere in the broader community.

The above statements have highlighted how the community: family theme emerged through the data to describe how Language Club has fostered a family-like network for Elders and learners to learn about one another. The data displays what makes the Language Club community a strong, family-like cohort. The discussion then defined Language Club as an emotional resource, and revealed how that emotional resource is used as a foundation for feeling empowerment, visibility, healing, and growth.

5.2 Community: Tradition and Culture

The theme of “community: tradition and culture” refers to the access Language Club offers to culture and tradition embodied in Elders who attend. Through Language Club participants have been able to spend time with, and get to know Elders in ways inaccessible for many Language Club members elsewhere. Access to Elders gives participants access to culture and tradition, and elements of pride. Being able to spend time with Elders is “a large part of why I like hanging out and going to these things” like Language Club (participant 2).

My two grandparents that are living, they live in Anchorage, and I never see them. And so I don't have access to older people. So that gives me that access, because they are some of my preferred company. I find elders extremely interesting, and they come from a time in life that I think I would have enjoyed. You know, very simple, very hard working but, you know, a hard life but a good life, and I think I would have enjoyed that. And I enjoy kind of basking in that ambiance that they provide. I also like being around them because they have been through so much, and ... they just keep on keeping on. I find them inspiring. And so that is a large part of why I like hanging out and going to these things, just to see them (participant 2).

Participant 4 expands by explaining how the stories that Elders share “opens doors” to traditions, histories, and cultural insight in unique ways.

Opening the doors... and there again, opening the doors on the songs really heightened their [Elders] awareness of their language and their willingness to share and then from that generated stories about that holiday in Karluk [for example: Easter, Russian New Year, Starring, etc.] or that one in Akhiok, and that was extremely valuable. Cause they hadn't talked about it for years. And so, you know that added a lot of interest there, and a lot of meaning and a lot of purpose to the meaning (participant 4).

The importance of sharing stories and histories, tradition and culture emerged from the data 21 times in seven of the participant discussions. Sharing stories and histories with Elders “was extremely valuable” for both participants and Elders to get to know one another, as participant 5 explains: “So that is another reason that I go, it feels good to be there. To be with Elders, and I know it makes them happy to be able to give that language to us and to feel useful.”

For participant 5, not only does it feel good to spend time with Elders, but sharing the language, culture, traditions, and histories, brings Elders satisfaction as well.

They [the Elders] feel like family. So that is another reason that I go, it feels good to be there. To be with Elders, and I know it makes them happy to be able to give that language to us and to feel useful...they get to be the bearers of that knowledge and history. We get to be the people who respect them for that” (participant 5).

As participant 5, in the above statement notes, sharing the Elders’ knowledge and history has not only created a family-like bond between participants and Elders, but also enables participants to respect Elders for their specific knowledge and history. Being able to make Elders feel valuable and satisfied brought participant 5 a sense of satisfaction as well. Sharing these opportunities creates strong family-like bonds between Elders and

participants. “Well, I think that the cultural connection is something that is so heartfelt by the people who feel [it] that it is just something that cannot be matched” (participant 1).

Knowledge that sprouts from interactions at Language Club, whether it is language, cultural, traditional, or emotional connections, has become a point of pride for participants. Participant 1 reflects how s/he “feel[s] a lot of pride because [s/he has] done so well” with learning Alutiiq. Participant 3 expands by recognizing that “it makes me proud to be a language learner.” Pride fostered through culturally specific knowledge arose in conversation during five interviews a total of 16 times throughout the data collection process.

Participant 3 also discussed how it felt “kind of cool to be a culture bearer” and to “set an example for our younger generation” through the knowledge and insight shared by Elders. Events like Language Club gave participant 3 access to knowledge that empowers her/him to be a “culture bearer” and a role model for “our younger generation,” which has led to elements of healing, as participant 3 has used this information to learn how to “walk in two worlds.”

On a larger level, a much larger level, it is kind of cool to be a culture bearer. And even more broad than that, to set an example for our younger generation. You know I obviously have led the life outside the culture for a really long time... since, I have learned to do a lot of different things: from skinning and tanning animal hides, to carving antler and ivory, to learning how to speak a language. It has been a game changer for me personally. And to set that example to say: you

don't have to live wholly in this world, or wholly in that world. There is a way to bridge it, and live a respectful life that includes elements of: you know, we walk in two worlds. And you can do that..." (participant 3).

Participant 3 discussed, in the above statement, how learning about culture and language has "been a game changer" for him/her that has created ties to culture, Elders, and the younger generation. Continuing to learn about the Alutiiq language, culture, and history is an empowering exercise for participant 3 who finds "it is really rewarding." Speaking specifically about language, participant 3 indicates her/his motivation to continue learning is to "be able to speak to our Elders, ... I don't want them to have nobody to talk too." The discussions participant 3 wants to have with Elders requires cultural competency to understand the "things that don't translate between Alutiiq and English." Being able to draw from the knowledge Elders share is one of this participant's language learning objectives.

I think that this work is really important. There are things that don't translate between Alutiiq and English. And there are, I guess ways of being that can't be described in English, adequately. I am curious if I will find them in Alutiiq. And also because it is really cool to learn. And you have those 'ah-ha' moments that you don't remember those 'ah-ha' moments as a little kid when you are figuring out how to speak English, and you do as an adult learning how to speak an Indigenous language... It is really rewarding. And also I would like to be able to

... speak to our Elders, and I don't want them to have nobody to talk too (participant 3).

By learning Alutiiq, participants gain even greater access to knowledge about culture, revealing how the Alutiiq language works within traditional or cultural contexts.

Participant 3 is curious to discover the “things that don't translate between Alutiiq and English.” For participant 3, the goal of learning is multi faceted and tied to healing. In the above quotation, we can see how participant 3 wants to discover “things that don't translate”, like “ways of being” which, when discovered will be “really rewarding.” S/he also wants to “be able to speak to our Elders” and continue learning from them.

Similarly, this participant has recognized the impacts that language loss has had on Elders and strives to mitigate against that happening again, “I don't want them to have nobody to talk too.” Breaking down participant 3's statement sheds light on how this individual experiences and participates in healing through her/his own personal growth, by helping others, and being available to Elders specifically.

Participant 5 corroborates the “sense of achievement when I understand something and can use it”, describing a goal focused on personal growth. Acquiring new information motivates participant 5 to share the information learned and “let[s] someone else master” what they just learned, mobilizing others to grow from participant 5's personal growth. Participant 4 also reflects on when “I had that ‘ah-ha moment... I feel an accomplishment.” The example of participant 5 sharing knowledge acquired articulates part of their goal to help others.

I have a very strong sense of achievement when I understand something and can use it outside of the context it was taught to me in. I have another feeling of achievement when I know I have taught someone else. When I learned something, mastered it, and now I have let someone else master it, and they can teach it. It is like two separate feelings of achievement (participant 5).

Or for me, ... I had that ‘ah-ha’ moment, which are minimal, but when they happen.... I feel like an accomplishment (participant 4).

Participants reflect on their sense of “accomplishment” (participant 4), “achievement” (participant 5), and how these feelings accumulate to become “a game changer” (participant 3). When participant 3 described how learning about culture, language, and traditions brought her/him from leading a “life outside the culture for a really long time...” we can begin to see how healing has emerged in covert ways for participants. All eight participants shared how language and the resources found through Language Club have changed into a “lifestyle” (participant 8) of sorts. The ways culture, language, and tradition scaffold pride and healing for participants emerged 32 times throughout the data collection period. Changes toward a lifestyle focused around the community at Language Club, language, culture and tradition were recognized as fulfilling, empowering, and healing. All participants reflected on this in their own words, but

participant 3 candidly noted how their participation has flipped a “gratification switch” for them.

I have an immediate gratification switch just like everyone else, and it is awesome to be able to build on what I know. It makes me a little, this is a terrible word: It makes me proud to be a language learner, to be able to communicate with our fluent speaking Elders in a language that is not English. However, often I realize I don’t know as much as I would like to... (participant 3)

This is the same participant who noted earlier how prior to participation, they had lived a “life outside the culture for a really long time.” Through integrating aspects of culture, language, traditions, and community as fostered through opportunities like the Language Club, they now have their language learner role as a point of personal pride based on knowledge and traditions learned from Elders and accessed through language learning and community. Revisiting participant 3’s discussion shows how s/he has personally learned how to “walk in two worlds”, and that “you can do that” (participant 3). Other participants shared similar experiences on how their “gratification switch” was triggered through participation. Seven participants articulated “gratification switch” flipping experiences 20 times throughout the data, all of which were manifest in ways that were points of pride, healing, and empowering.

This section outlined the ways participants discussed the importance of accessing traditional and cultural insight as central to their continued participation. Participants also

indicated the bonding effects resulting from access to traditions, culture, Elders' knowledge, and language. These attributes create a sense of pride for participants. Ultimately, participants have found access to Elders to be a valuable resource. Knowledge gained from Elders becomes a point of pride, and fosters healing. Language Club has provided access to Elders, and through Elders participants gain access to tradition and culture, and Elders gain purpose.

5.3 Community: Healing

Language Club creates space for Elders and learners to share language, stories, histories, culture, and traditions. Each of these attributes feeds into an aspect of pride and healing for Elders and participants alike. Through shared stories participants learn about Elders and get to respect them for their knowledge and experiences. Elders passing along knowledge, language, tradition, and culture, which fosters community pride and healing. Participant 2 recognized the ways the Alutiiq language and community language events have been a “really... big piece of medicine that our community is missing.”

A central aspect of healing resulted from Elders sharing stories and experiences with Language Club participants. Many of the stories shared by Elders enabled participants to recognize how Elders' lives were “a real hardship” and how living that way “would be draining to have to do that for years...” (participant 4). Elders felt comfortable to share stories of hardship with the Language Club community, which offered insight and perspective to participants who have not experienced similar hardship.

Well yes, we have no idea what it feels like not to be able to speak the language. If you came to work and you couldn't speak English at all ... That would be a real test for you, a real hardship. It would be draining, and they have had to do that for years and years and years. Just in recent years a couple of them finally opened up a little bit more ... And it is through gatherings like the Language Club, which was our first one, and through that type of thing. Opening those doors that had been closed for so long (participant 4).

Greater cultural and historical insight resulted from Elders sharing stories, or as participant 4 described it “opening those doors that had been closed for so long.” By “opening those doors” Language Club creates opportunities to better understand difficult personal and communal histories.

Because Elders have opened up and shared, participants have gained deeper respect as they learned about Elders' lives and experiences, and observed the ways “they are moving on and they are healing” (participant 2). Not only are Elders able to “move on” and heal through sharing experiences, but also participants are able to grow from these lessons. Participant 2 reflected how shared stories and experiences within a community setting, leads to healing, s/he notes “that is how we grow.” Participant 8 in particular also recognizes how growth and healing results from shared histories: “It matters to me that they [Elders] feel the way they do about how their childhood was and how shitty they were treated, and how they were abused because of what they spoke, and my sense of idealism kicked in...and so now that is what is motivating me” (participant

8). Of course, all narratives shared with participants do not point toward the “shitty [ways] they [Elders] were treated, ... [or] how they were abused” (participant 8), but Elders also share stories about “how things were, [and] how great that was” (participant 5). Both types of narratives embody lessons and insight for participants.

I have learned a lot about our Elders. About their health, their practices, their history, their stories, and how to take care of them. I understand what they wish they had, and what they wish was different. There has been a lot of talk about how things were, how great that was, and who shows respect for them, and who doesn't and how that is done (participant 5).

As participant 5 recognizes, in the above quotation, Elders' stories grant access to “their history, their stories, ... [and] how things were....” Learning about Elders and finding ways to heal through narratives, histories, and access to culture was discussed 56 times by all eight participants throughout the data collection process. Although healing was discussed in different ways, all participants recognized the importance of created space that offers healing. When Elders share their narratives and insights, participants become privy to information about their culture and group histories, which itself becomes a point of pride and healing for participants.

Learning about each other in the Language Club environment builds relationships, and becomes a central component to continued participation. Participant 1 describes the relationships formed as “really contagious.” This participant continues by describing how

Language Club “feels like a friends group, or a new family unit or something... there is a lot of togetherness.” The “togetherness” experienced at Language Club enables some Elders to metaphorically “open doors that had been closed for so long” (participant 4) when they shared their stories. Sharing stories has brought “unity” (participant 2) to Language Club, and has helped participant 3 discover how “we walk in two worlds... you can do that....” Continued participation in the Language Club community has been “empowering, it shows visibility” for participant 4. “You know it is empowering, it shows visibility, it also is a great environment for you to really see the culture come alive” (participant 4). Through “opening doors” and learning how to “walk in two worlds” (participant 3) participants have grown.

It has been interesting though to watch the whole growth of this process in just the last three years that I have been fairly involved, and seeing so much growth in just about everyone. I have seen perspectives do a full 180. And people seeing things from a different perspective that then leads to healing in their own life. And I have seen people really change (participant 2).

Growth is evidenced through observable change, like adapting “different perspectives... [leading] to healing” or through observed “growth in just about everyone” (participant 2). Language Club participation “opens doors” (participant 4) and helps participants learn how to “walk in two worlds” (participant 3), which brings elements of growth and healing based on the relationships found at Language Club.

As discussed in the beginning, Language Club has created space for Elders and learners to share language, stories, histories, culture, and traditions, all of which feed into aspects of pride and healing. Elders passing along their knowledge, language, traditions and culture has not only created a unique community within Kodiak City, but has fostered both individual and community healing, often times in covert ways. Again, reflecting on participant 2's observation about how the Alutiiq language and community language events have functioned as a "big piece of medicine" for the community that was "missing" before sheds light on the important role healing has played throughout the history of Language Club.

5.4 Conclusion

As evidenced through the above discussion, we can begin to see the ways participants find the overarching theme of community central to their participation in Language Club. Language Club participants find strong family-like attributes through the community fostered in Language Club. The family-like attributes create an "emotional resource" (participant 4) that is a basis for empowerment, healing, growth, and visibility. Through Language Club participation, participants also discover cultural and traditional elements inaccessible elsewhere within the community. Participants also find participation as healing and a point of pride, for both themselves and the Elders they interact with. Healing from the impacts of colonization where racism and marginalization were linked to Alutiiq language and culture is directly tied to shared Alutiiq language experiences, histories, culture, and traditions. At this point, the reader should be reminded

of the *maqiwik* (figure 6) metaphor presented at the beginning of this chapter. The quotations and short narratives shared by participants, outlined a bounded community where the sub-themes interact and are influenced by one another. For example, healing is a byproduct of the family-like attributes, and access to culture and tradition. This byproduct is similar to the byproduct of heat as a result of burning wood in a wood stove as represented in the *maqiwik* illustration, and is atmospheric in nature. How the theme of community, along with its sub themes of family, culture and tradition, healing, interact begin to point toward important overarching realities to be discussed in the next chapter.

6.0 Implications

Through domination and subjugation, those in power gain control over, or colonize Indigenous populations and lands. For Brayboy (2006, 430) colonization continues to be maintained today through “European American thought, knowledge, and power structures [that] dominate present-day society in the United States.”

Decolonization, therefore, can be defined as the undoing of colonialism, or to follow Brayboy (2006), Weenie (2000), Smith (1999), and others, creating space for non-European American (e.g., Alutiiq) thought, knowledge and power structures (for more on colonization, see section 3.3). Resistance can likewise be defined as a refusal to accept or comply with the thought, knowledge, and power structures that dominate society.

Through refusing to accept or comply with the thought, knowledge, and power structures that dominate society, Language Club participants have created space for Alutiiq thought, knowledge, and power structures, thereby engaging directly in resistance and decolonization.

Smith (1999, 4) tells us that spaces that have been used to marginalize and repress may become sites of “resistance and hope.” As key sites of historical marginalization and repression, Alutiiq language and culture become rich environments for resistance, hope and decolonization. Weenie (2000) argues that collective action, like that found at Language Club, is integral to decolonization. By redefining personal relationships and building a family-like community, Language Club allows its participants to construct a “theory of resistance” (Weenie 2000, 69) and challenge dominant definitions of “what is normal” (67). A theory of resistance helps the community recognize colonization,

hegemony, and dominant ideologies about who they are, or who they should be, so that they may act to counter them. Language Club allows participants to redefine who they are by affirming their identity as Alutiiq individuals through participation in a family-like community dedicated to Alutiiq culture, tradition, and language learning and speaking. In this way, Language Club facilitates individual and group healing through “positive affirmation and self-acceptance” in order to “overcome the negative messages of who we are” and lays the foundation for further “collective action” (Weenie 2000, 67).

As discussed in chapter 5, the overarching themes community, family-like connections, tradition and culture, and healing create an environment for a theory of resistance to develop and grow. Through the *maqiwik* metaphor, we can see that the community in and of itself largely represents the Alutiiq Language Club’s theory of resistance, where the group is enabled and empowered to redefine themselves within an Alutiiq context. However, Language Club in and of itself does not function as the sole site for resistance and decolonization within the broader community. Instead, the metaphorical *maqiwik* functions as a “place of beginning”, a “phase of resistance” (Weenie 2000, 68), meaning Language Club is a starting point, “part of the process” in resistance and decolonization.

In a similar study, Bell and Marlow (2009) found that the social interaction fostered at the Dena’ina Language Institute (a project for Dena’ina Athabascan people conducted on the Kenai Peninsula of Alaska) lead to visibility, healing and resistance for participants. Visibility came through accentuating a Native identity, as participants were able to identify themselves as Dena’ina language learners. Through participation in the

Dena'ina Language Institute, participants were able to gain a sense of their “Dena'ina-ness” as an attribute of their identity. One participant from Bell and Marlow's (2009) study noted that previous to participation, they “just didn't even want to know” that they were Dena'ina; they “had no idea” (13). This participant describes how their identity was not a point of shame, but was “beyond that. I suppressed it, you know... I would have to think about it if someone asked me if I was [Dena'ina]” (Bell and Marlow 2009, 13). Through participation, Dena'ina Language Institute participants were able to define a sense of individual and collective “Dena'ina-ness.” Identifying themselves as Dena'ina empowered participants to resist the homogenizing forces of the dominant society. In this way, the Dena'ina Language Institute provided the space (Smith 1999) necessary for the collective action (Weenie 2000) integral to decolonization.

Similar forms of decolonization are evident in Language Club, where participation in Language Club added to a participants' “Alutiiq-ness.” Participant 2 expressed their desire “to obtain Native thinking” or “to think with an Alutiiq brain, as opposed to with an American brain.” This participant recognized that adapting in this way would “be beneficial physically and spiritually.” In this way participant 2 is articulating “Native thinking” as a potential mechanism for personal decolonization where “Native thinking” builds counter thought and knowledge and places power outside colonial contexts. “Native thinking” also grants this participant deeper insight into the Alutiiq language, culture, and traditions.

In her study of Alutiiq language revitalization, Counciller (2010) likewise found evidence of participants “asserting a cultural identity in a society focused on

homogeneity” (Counciller 2010, 203). For Counciller’s participants, community survival was defined “not just [as] physical survival”, but also the “perpetuation of community ... and the right for Native people to resist acculturation” (Counciller 2010, 204). In Counciller’s work with the New Words Council, resistance to acculturation came through the formation of new Alutiiq words. New words gave participants the “ability to speak to each other without having to revert to English”, which “reinforce[ed] the boundedness and perpetuation of community” (Counciller 2010, 204).

Findings from the Language Club articulate similar desires to use Alutiiq as a mechanism for defining and reinforcing the boundedness of community. Participant 3 found value and pride in being “able to communicate with fluent speaking Elders in a language that is not English.” Alutiiq use in this way defines the individual as a speaker or learner of Alutiiq, reinforcing an Alutiiq identity within the Language Club community. These attributes again carve out space for resistance and hope for participants.

Both Bell and Marlow (2009) and Counciller (2010), and now this study support Iseke-Barnes’ (2004, 74) conclusion that language learning opportunities like the Dena’ina Language Institute, New Words Council, and Language Club may provide the space for personal and group decolonization by providing space for “resistance and hope”:

In seeking out and learning an Indigenous language, Indigenous peoples can engage resistance by learning cultural knowledges in the language, coming to understand Indigenous histories, and by coming to understand Indigenous

knowledges. In questioning language practices we are engaged in resistance to dominant discourses which further serve to oppress us (Iseke-Barnes 2004, 74).

6.1 Suggestions for further research

A possible tension may be found in this research between the perceived ability of Language Club participants to acquire Alutiiq proficiency through Language Club attendance and the role Language Club plays as a site of resistance and decolonization for its members.

Language Club has come to represent a community of Alutiiq learners and speakers. Although participants will most likely not become proficient in Alutiiq through Language Club participation alone, Language Club offers access to specific attributes language learners need to be successful. Language Club creates space for Alutiiq to become valorized by creating a unique community structure built upon language learning and sharing. Language Club also emphasizes group learning and collaboration, fostering a strong sense of community and extended family that can scaffold learning (Kasten 1992, 112).

This “tension” creates opportunity to look deeper into Language Club participants’ learning realities. There is opportunity to consider the benefits Language Club can offer a language learner, both in and outside of Language Club. This research gives rise to the question about how decolonization and resistance fit into the broader goals of language learning, and the roles decolonization and resistance play in language acquisition. There is opportunity to better understand how decolonization, resistance, and

language valorization play in learner motivation to continue learning or seek out other, potentially more effective avenues toward language acquisition. In this way, there lies opportunity for further research about how community-learning environments may actually scaffold language learning outside the one-hour a week meetings represented through Language Club.

Similarly, when considering Weenie's (2000, 68) observations about a theory of resistance being a "place of beginning", or point of departure for greater social change, I begin to wonder how Language Club will further influence social change within the Language Club community, broader community, and Alutiiq language. Although these answers can only be realized by looking toward future researchers to consider continued research, I begin to wonder what lessons will continue to be gleaned from Language Club, and how a theory of resistance within Kodiak, and within the language movement will continue to develop.

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Appendix 1: Interview Script

Alutiiq Language Club Participant Perspectives: Goals and Resources

Open ended Interview Script, for participants in the Alutiiq Language Club

Interviewer: First of all I would like to say *Quyuanaa* (thank you) for talking with me. Before we begin, I want to make sure you are still willing to talk with me.

I would like to start by going over the Informed Consent Form with you again before we start. Here is a copy of it. Have I gone over this with you before? Did you have any questions for me about it? [review form with interviewee]

Is it OK if I tape record our conversation?

Interviewer: [State date and location] I want to remind you that this interview is completely voluntary; you can ask me to stop the recording at any time. I can also destroy the recording and my notes on this interview if you ask me to and you can request this at any time up until my research is published.

Interviewer: We are doing an interview about the Alutiiq Language Club and participant goals and perspectives. Do you mind if I use your name or community name?

Is that OK with you if we keep going?

Interviewer: This interview will be semi-structured. I am going to invite you to talk about some things and tell stories. I would also like to remind you that you can and should avoid any topics that are uncomfortable. I don't want to ask you scripted questions from this sheet; my script is for reference only.

After the interview is done, I will complete a transcript for you as quickly as possible. When you get your copy, you may then make any changes you see fit. You may delete information; make additions, clarifications, etc. You will be allowed to do anything you want with the interview. This includes destroying the whole thing and walking away. My goal is to reflect your views as closely as possible. I will have to show my committee the data, but not until I get the O.K. from you.

To start things off, would you mind tell me about yourself? Where are you from?

The following are topics that will be used to guide the interview:

- *Personal history/involvement with the Alutiiq language, or Alutiiq Language Club*

Where are you from originally? What was it like the first time you walked into Language Club? Can you tell me about how you became involved with the Language Club? When did you first hear about Language Club? Did anyone in particular get you involved? What keeps you coming back to Language Club? Can you tell me about a language learning experience that was good? What did you like? What was one that was bad? What didn't you like? Why?

- *What are the spoken and unspoken goals of participants?*

How is Language Club important to you? How long have you participated in the Alutiiq Language Club? Why do you continue to participate in Language Club? Would you recommend coming to Language Club to others? Who? Why? Does speaking Alutiiq, and participating in the Language Club relate to how you would define yourself? Besides learning Alutiiq, what else do you get out of Language Club?

- *What product or 'end result' do participants seek through participating in the Language Club? How do goals match/mismatch available activities/resources in language revitalization? For example: Does Language Club itself help participants reach their goals? Do available activities outside Language Club better meet their needs? If so, how do you use them?*

What are you hoping to get out of Language Club? What do you want to see as a result of your participation in Language Club? Is Language Club beneficial to you? In what ways?

- *What are Language Club participant goals? And how do they define their goals?*

Does Language Club help you reach your language goals? Do Alutiiq websites and interactive activities help participants reach their goals? What do you do outside Language Club to learn Alutiiq? Where do you use the things you have learned in Language Club?

- Other loose ends

Is there anything else you would like to tell me? Is there something that we did not get to talk about that you would like to bring up at this time? Do you have any questions for me?

Quyanasinaq- Thank you very much for agreeing to this interview and helping me. I will get you a copy of the recording and the transcript as soon as possible. Thank you again!

Remember, when you get your copy, you may make any changes you see fit. You may delete information; make additions, clarifications, etc. You will be allowed to do anything you want with the interview. This includes destroying the whole thing and walking away.

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

Alutiiq Language Club Participant Perspectives: Goals and Resources

Informed Consent Form

IRB# 335770

Date Approved: 5 May, 2012

I (Michael James Bach) am doing research on the Alutiiq Language Club. I want to hear what you think as a member of the Alutiiq Language Club. I want to interview you to learn more about the Alutiiq Language Club. I want to know what the Language Club means to you and your goals. Participation is completely voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, your contributions and participation at Alutiiq Language Club meetings will not be used.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating, let me know. If you do not understand any part of this Form, please ask about it now. If you would like this to be explained to you in Alutiiq, please ask me, and I can get help with this.

If you agree to participate, you should know that:

- You won't be paid for your time. There is no benefit to you. However, people will learn about our Alutiiq Language Club.
- There are no risks to being interviewed. If we talk about anything that is personal or upsetting you can change the subject. If you want, I can stop the recording and destroy it. I can help you find counseling or other help if you request it.
- You can choose to stop an interview whenever you want. You can redirect the interview. You can remove your recording or name from this project at any time up until I publish my results. If you don't like a question you can decide to not answer it.
- You can remove yourself from the study at any time.
- I won't use your name, community name, or any other identifying information in my thesis unless you wish to be identified. All your contributions will be kept private, unless otherwise directed.
- I will give you a written copy of your interview and recording. You may make any changes. You may delete information; make additions, clarifications, etc. You will be allowed to do anything you want to with the interview. Including

destroying the whole thing and walking away. I will not share anything with my committee until I get an O.K. from you.

- You have the right to access your recordings and notes. Once I receive an O.K. from you, both my graduate committee and I will have access to the recordings and notes.
- This research will be used for my master's thesis, other shorter articles and school papers, and in speeches at conferences. I will give you the opportunity to provide feedback on your component of my thesis. Your feedback will make sure that your message will be expressed, not mine.
- I will have community talks about my findings before I publish.

Questions:

If you have any questions, ask me now. If you have any questions later please contact any one of us.

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If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Research Coordinator in the Office of Research Integrity at (907) 474-7800 (Fairbanks area) or 1-866-876-7800 (outside the Fairbanks area) or fyirb@uaf.edu.

Statement of Informed Consent:

I, *(name)*_____, have read and discussed the guidelines for the research project. I agree to participate. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I understand that I can quit at any time. I will not be paid to participate. **I want the following level of access to my name in this research:**

I wish my name to be kept as private as possible. My name will NOT be used in any publications or presentations. All efforts will be made to protect my identity in connection with this research. I reserve the right to review what Michael has written before it goes to publication.

My name can be linked with the research. I understand that my name, home community, and other information may be used in publications or presentations. I know that I can change my involvement to *confidential*, or private at any time. I can do this simply by calling. I reserve the right to review what Michael has written before it goes to publication.

Please check here if you have received a copy of this consent form to bring home.

Print Name (Research Participant)

Print Name (Obtaining Consent)

Signature Date

Signature Date

Appendix 3: Post-Data Discussion Hand Out

Codes occurring in individual interviews:

CODE	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	Total
community	9	9	3	18	8	5	3	4	59
return	5	7	1	8	3	5	1	4	34
conflict	2	6	1	8	4	7	0	5	33
empowerment	4	7	6	3	5	0	0	1	26
methods	2	4	3	0	7	2	4	4	26
special	5	3	4	4	4	2	1	2	25
realization	2	3	2	4	3	0	1	2	17
goals	3	3	1	0	3	2	2	2	16
history	0	0	0	0	0	10	1	5	16
background	1	6	0	2	2	3	0	1	15
revitalization	1	0	1	4	2	3	2	1	14
healing	1	4	0	0	1	0	3	3	12
ownership	3	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	9
fun	3	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	8
reading & writing	1	1	0	2	1	0	2	0	7
lacking	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	5
frequency	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	3
fear	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Total	44	54	25	57	48	41	21	37	327

Top code definitions:

1. Community: gatherings, the importance of community, being a part of something larger, special space for Alutiiq only
2. Return: why do learners continue to return to language club?
3. Conflict: any sort of conflict: Maybe they are in conflict with each other, maybe in conflict with their past experiences. NOT North South styles
4. Empowerment: feeling empowered by speaking the language, learning the language, being involved. Pride in their language abilities, cultural attributes, things they have learned, etc.
5. Methods: methods for teaching/learning. methods that make language club more effective/efficient.
6. Special: what makes being part of language club special

Co-occurring codes:

- 7 Participants continue to return to language club because of the community fostered through participation (return & community)
- 6 Two aspects of language club are empowering: The community fostered in language club and the feeling of participating in something 'special' (community & empowerment, special & empowerment)
- 5 Participants also continue to return to language club because they feel 'special' through their opportunity to participate (special & community, return & community)
- 4 Community & ownership / background & conflict / special & realization